

# HISTORY OF ENGLAND

## PART I: To 1485

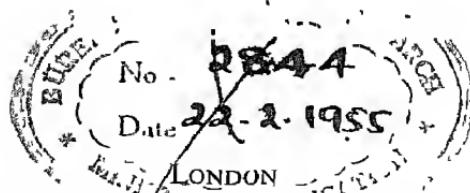
BY

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## PREFACE

THIS book is intended, in the first place, for the use of pupils in the middle and upper forms of schools, but it will also be of value to others who are seeking an outline of the history of England to form a basis for further, or specialised, reading.

The authors have attempted, throughout, to treat history not merely as a narrative of events, but in such a way that the connection between cause and effect is definitely shown. It is clearly indicated that the various developments of the story have a correlated meaning, that the history of any country is in fact a continuous growth, its institutions being constantly changing and developing organisms, and that the present, however superficially different, has been moulded by the past, and cannot be understood unless that past is known and appreciated.

The main thread of the story is of course the history of England itself from the successive waves of invasion that went to the making of the English people, onward through the development of religious, social, and political institutions, to modern times. But the history of a nation cannot be isolated from world history, and England, more than other countries perhaps, has always been closely mixed in world affairs. A good deal of space has been given, therefore, to European history in order to place English foreign policy in its proper context. In the same way, though English colonisation has been treated in more detail than that of other nations, the penetration and division of the world by the other European Nations has been traced, particularly in the case of Africa and the Far East.

## PREFACE

The history of the self-governing Dominions has been sketched, and some prominence given to India and its problems. Moreover—a subject surprisingly neglected in many textbooks—an attempt has been made to deal with the expansion, during the last and present century, of the United States of America, and with the history of China since the western nations began their penetration of that country.

For some of the many illustrations incorporated in the work thanks are due to the Keeper and Secretary of the London Museum, the Manchester Corporation, the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Public Record Office.

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By D M GLEW, M A, and HAROLD PLASKITT, M A

*In Three Parts, Illustrated —*

PART I To 1485 2s 6d    PART II 1485—1714 2s 6d

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# HISTORY OF ENGLAND

## PART I

### CHAPTER I

#### ROMAN BRITAIN

#### CELTIC BRITAIN

If we were able to go back about two thousand years, to the time when our country's written history begins, we should find ourselves in a world very different from that of to-day. It was a world that seemed smaller than ours, for a large part of the globe was still unexplored. Its centre was the Mediterranean Sea, round the shore of which lay the countries that made up the Roman empire. This empire, to which Britain belonged for about four hundred years, a period as long as from the Reformation to the present day, was important because it included the whole of the civilised western world.

Rome, the "mistress of the world," had once been no more than an Italian city state, surrounded by enemies. She had built up her great empire by war and conquest. Some of the countries she conquered, like Egypt and Greece, were much older and more cultured than she, and from these the Romans learnt much, which they in turn taught to the younger and more barbarous nations of the west—Spain, Gaul and Britain. In this way Rome did a tremendous service to us all, for she brought civilisation into western Europe and guarded it there by her power. When she fell, it remained to be the foundation of the modern world.

During the great days of the Roman empire Britain lay on the edge of the known world, and in the barbarous and uncivilised west. Thus Britain was quite unimportant in ancient times, and remained for so long unknown that her written history begins when that of countries like Egypt had already lasted thousands of years.

In Roman times Britain was inhabited by Celts, a tall, fair, or red-haired people, who had spread all over western Europe.

settling in northern Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Britain. In the British Isles there were three races of Celts (1) the Gaels, who had settled in Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Highlands of Scotland, (2) the Brythons, who were spread over England and Wales, and who gave the Celtic name of Britain to the island, and (3) the Belgae, who came over from Gaul a good deal later than the other Celts and settled in various parts of the southwest. Living scattered among the Celts, who had conquered them when they invaded the island, were older inhabitants, the Iberians, a race of small, dark-haired people who were descended from the men of the stone age.

Britain was rich in metals, and from very early times exported tin to the continent. This tin trade was the thing that chiefly interested the two earliest writers who mention her. These were Pytheas of Marseilles, an explorer who sailed right round the island and visited the south coast at the end of the fourth century B.C., and Poseidonius of Rhodes, who came to Britain in the second century B.C. The tin was mined in Cornwall, and was shipped from St Michael's Mount to Gaul, where it was carried overland to Marseilles. The Britons had a coinage of their own about two hundred years before the birth of Christ. Trade was not only carried on with Europe but in Britain, between tribe and tribe. The Celts were divided into many tribes, each of which had its own ruler and a tribal centre, or town, which was fortified and became a sort of capital of the district in which the tribe lived. The Celtic tribes often fought with each other, and had no kind of common national feeling or government. The people who lived in Britain had much to do with those who lived in Gaul, indeed some tribes of Belgae held land in both countries and most of the foreign trade of Britain was in the hands of the Gallic Veneti. Britons went to seek their fortunes in Gaul, and Gauls in Britain. The chief difference between the inhabitants of the two countries was that the Gauls, since they lived nearer to civilisation, were always a little in advance of the Britons, though the Britons who lived nearest to Gaul imitated them closely and so kept in front of the people in the more remote parts of the island.

The Celts of Britain were by no means mere savages. They were skilled metal workers and weavers, and understood agriculture. A great deal of wheat was grown in the south, and under the Romans Britain became a corn exporting country.



*B. J. Greenawalt - American Museum of Natural History, New York*

FLINT MINE IN BRITAIN ABOUT 2000 B C

One of the most barbaric customs of the Britons was to tattoo themselves, and they continued to do this till the Roman conquest. Among the Gordels of northern Scotland the practice survived even later, causing the Romans to call them "Picti," or painted people.

The Britons had many gods, but we know very little about them, because after the Roman conquest the native gods received Roman names and became identified with the gods of Rome, e.g. Mars, Jupiter, Apollo. The priests of the Celtic tribes of both Britain and Gaul were known as Druids and were exceedingly powerful. They offered sacrifices to the gods, decided disputes, and educated the young. The young men who wished to enter their order had to undergo a long training, for all their knowledge and traditions had to be learnt by heart, since they were not written down. Druidism formed another link between Britain and Gaul for it was spread through both countries, and every year the Druids held a great meeting in central Gaul.

### THE ROMAN CONQUEST

It was because Britain was so closely connected with Gaul that the Romans first invaded the island. While the Roman general, Julius Caesar, was conquering Gaul he heard a great deal about Britain and found Britons fighting among his enemies. It seemed likely that, so long as the Britons remained free, they would send help to their fellow Celts in Gaul in their struggle against Roman rule. Also Caesar heard exaggerated reports about the wealth of the island. Gold was said to be abundant there, and Caesar, who was a politician as well as a soldier, needed money to pay his supporters. He also hoped to make a profit out of the sale of British captives as slaves and to increase his own influence over the Roman people by dazzling them with new conquests.

Caesar invaded Britain twice, in 55 B.C. and in 54 B.C. He landed in Kent, and in 55 B.C. did very little, but the next year he returned and marched north of the Thames into the country of the Catuvellauni, whose king, Cassivellaunus, was the leader of the British tribes in their opposition to the Romans. Caesar captured Verulamium, near the modern St Albans, which was the fortress of Cassivellaunus, and forced the King to give him hostages and to promise to pay tribute to Rome. Then he

returned to Gaul and left Britain alone, because his attention was occupied by civil wars at home.

For the next hundred years the Romans made no further attempt to conquer Britain, but since they established themselves firmly in Gaul they came into contact with the Britons a great deal. British trade with Gaul continued and Roman merchants sold ornaments, glassware, and ivory to the Britons, and bought slaves, cattle, and metals. Trade was easy because the British King of the Catuvellauni, who ruled the south of the island, was friendly to the Romans, but when this king, Cunobelinus, died,



PROW OF A ROMAN GALLEY

his kingdom fell into disorder, and the Roman merchants began to demand that their own government should interfere in Britain to protect their trade. Claudius, who was then emperor of Rome, wished to impress his subjects by new conquests, so in 43 AD he sent four legions, under the command of Aulus Plautius, to conquer Britain.

The Romans landed in Kent and had little trouble in conquering the tribes there. North of the Thames the Catuvellauni under Caratacus, the son of Cunobelinus, put up more resistance. Claudius himself came to Britain with reinforcements to help to take the stronghold of Camulodunum, the

modern Colchester, and to receive the homage of British tribes of the south. After this the Romans made very rapid progress, conquering the whole of the flat south-western part of the island in a very short time. The fact that British tribes had no real unity and would often join the Romans against their own countrymen made the conquest easier.

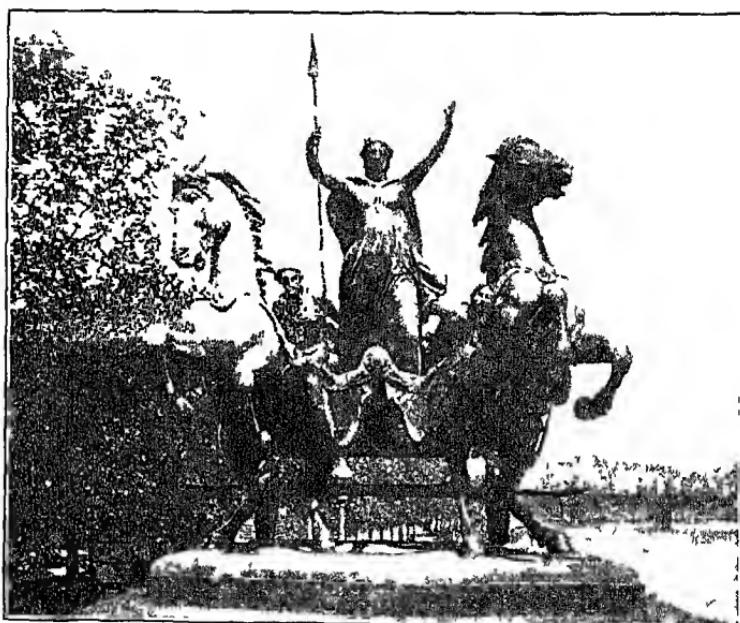
But Britain is made up of two different kinds of country. It is easy for an invader to over-run the south-eastern part which consists of level, or rolling country, and presents no great obstacle to advance in any direction. But the rest of the country is rough and mountainous, can be easily defended, and is difficult to conquer. The Romans therefore found themselves checked when they reached the hilly regions of the modern Devon and Cornwall, the mountains of Wales, and the northern hills of the Pennines.

After they had been conquered the lowlands did not give much trouble, except for a great revolt of the tribe of the Iceni in Norfolk (60 A.D.), which very nearly made an end of Roman rule in Britain. The Iceni revolted because their land had been seized by Rome on the death of their king, because the dead king's wife, Boadicea, had been ill-treated, and because Roman officials and money-lenders had been oppressing them. They rose suddenly, led by Boadicea, and massacred the Roman colonists settled at Camulodunum (Colchester), and defeated some Roman troops. The Roman settlers fled to London and to Verulamium (St Albans), but the Britons took both towns and slaughtered the inhabitants. The Roman governor, Suetonius Paulinus, who put down the revolt by defeating Boadicea's army, retaliated by a great massacre of Britons, and laid the country of the Iceni waste. His cruelty caused him to be recalled to Rome, but after this the British lowlands remained at peace.

By the time of Boadicea's revolt the Romans had been engaged for some time in trying to conquer the part of the country now called Wales. Caratacus fled there when he was driven out of his southern kingdom, but he was defeated and captured by the Roman governor, Ostorius Scapula (47-52), who died before he had completed the conquest of the Welsh mountains. The Druids, who did much to encourage British resistance to Rome, had their sacred groves on the island of Mona (Anglesey), so Suetonius Paulinus invaded the island and slaughtered the

Druids just before the revolt of the Iceni forced him to leave Wales and go south. The conquest of Wales was completed by Julius Agricola, who governed Britain 78-85 A.D.

Agricola was one of the most energetic governors of Britain. He himself came of a provincial family, so he understood the feelings of provincials, and ruled the Britons so tactfully that they began to give up the hostility to everything Roman that they had felt since the conquest, and to adopt Roman dress and



STATUE OF BOADICEA, VICTORIA EMBANKMENT, LONDON

customs. Agricola encouraged them to imitate Roman ways, and from the time of his governorship, south-east Britain began, like Gaul, to be Roman in spirit, and not merely subject to Roman rule.

Besides governing wisely, Agricola was an able soldier. When he had completed the conquest of Wales he advanced into the country of the Brigantes in the north of Britain. His conquests extended so far that they included what are now the Lowlands of Scotland, and he built a line of forts between the

estuaries of the Clyde and Forth to mark the new Roman frontier. He then invaded the Highlands, defeated the Picts, who lived there, in the battle of Mons Graupius (84 A.D.), and even sent a fleet to sail round the north of Britain. But these northern conquests had been much too rapidly made to be secure. When Agricola left Britain they were soon lost, so that his wars had less important results than his work of Romanising southern Britain.

The conquest of the north cost Rome a long struggle. The Brigantes who lived there were a large and powerful tribe, and revolted again and again. After one of their revolts the Emperor Hadrian visited Britain himself (120 A.D.), put down the rebellion, and built a fortified wall of sods across Britain between the Solway Firth and the Tyne to defend the Roman frontier. This wall, along the line of the Cheviots, really marks the limit reached by the Roman conquest. Though the Romans conquered the Scottish lowlands in the reign of the Emperor Pius, and built another wall (the Wall of Pius) between the Forth and the Clyde, along the line of Agricola's forts, they were soon forced to leave this region and take the Wall of Hadrian for their northern frontier. During the reign of the Emperor Severus this wall was rebuilt in stone, and remains as a remarkable monument to Roman energy and workmanship.

### ROMAN BRITAIN

The fact that Britain can be roughly divided into two kinds of country, lowlands in the south-east which could easily be conquered and hilly country in the west and north which it took years to subdue, had a very great effect upon the Roman occupation. The two regions were dealt with on quite different lines during the whole of the Roman period. The lowlands became a really civilised province, very like the other provinces of the empire. The highlands remained a military region, guarded by legions and forced to submit to Roman rule, but never much affected by the civilised life of Rome.

The Romans left their provinces a good deal of self-government. The Roman governor was responsible for things like taxation and the defence of the country, but to a considerable extent the Britons were left to rule themselves, though in a Roman fashion. In the greater part of the island each British



THE REMAINS OF THE ROMAN THEATRE OF VERULAMIUM (ST ALBANS), WHICH WERE DISCOVERED IN 1932

This illustration shows the Stage from the north-east

tribe kept and ruled the land which it had held before the Roman conquest, and the tribal chiefs or kings became Roman magistrates and continued to govern their own people. Each tribe had some kind of central fortress, or "dun," and these became towns, to which the Romans granted municipal government on the Roman model.

Most of the towns of Roman Britain developed from tribal "duns," but the Romans planted five "colonies" of their own—Camulodunum (Colchester), Verulamium (St Albans), Lindum (Lincoln), Glevum (Gloucester), and Eboracum (York). These colonies had their own charters and magistrates and ruled the district in which they stood. There were also certain imperial estates, like the lead mines of Somerset, which were governed by the Emperor's officials, and for his profit.

Not only did the Britons govern themselves, but no very large number of Romans came to settle among them. Rome did not, like modern empires, send out numbers of colonists to live in the countries which she ruled. Instead she taught the inhabitants of the provinces Roman ways and customs till they became thoroughly Roman themselves. Thus, when we talk of the Roman provincials in Britain, we really mean the Britons themselves, who had adopted Roman ways of living.

The British towns were laid out in Roman fashion, with straight streets which crossed one another at right angles (as in modern American cities), a forum, or market-place, in the centre, and a basilica, or town-hall, near it. There were also temples, for the Britons soon became Roman in their religion, and public baths on the Roman model where people could meet and talk. Most of the towns had walls and gates, but in the civilised south-east of the province, to which all the town life belonged, there were no troops, for the country was peaceful and civilised, and soldiers were no more necessary to keep order than in modern England.

The people of the towns spoke Latin as well as their own Celtic tongue, and were acquainted with the literature and art of the Romans. They imitated Rome closely, wore Roman clothes, and built their houses on the Roman model, though some modifications were needed because of the difference in climate of Britain and Italy. Because of the cold, central heating was used.



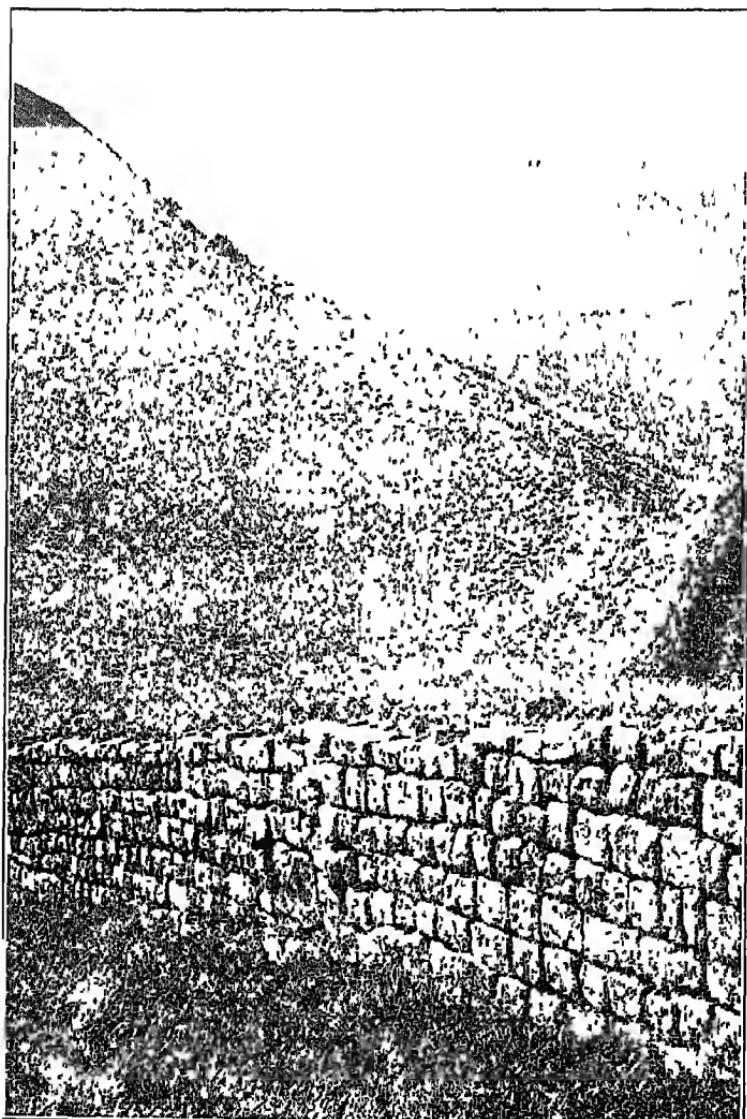
*From a mural painting by Ford Madox Brown in the Manchester Town Hall, by permission of the Manchester Corporation*

**THE ROMANS BUILDING A FORT**

The country people were probably less Romanised, though the "villas" scattered about the countryside may have been centres of Roman culture. These "villas" were country houses with estates attached to them. Agriculture thrived, and Britain was a great corn-producing and exporting region. The island was also noted for its craftsmen, its cloth manufacture, and its mines, of which the lead mines were the most important.

All this civilisation belonged to the south-east of the country. In the highland regions of Devon, Cornwall, Wales, and the north there were no villas, no towns on the Roman model, and the British tribes probably lived very much as they had done before the Roman conquest. They did not speak Latin, nor become Roman in their habits and ways of thought. The Roman towns, like Viriconium (Wroxeter), of which remains exist in these regions, are not really towns at all, but military stations occupied by the legions, and with little purely civilian life. The Roman legion did not move about the country, but had its home in one place, and it did not live in barracks like a modern regiment, but in a fortified camp, which was planned very much like a town. The Roman army was not composed entirely of foreign troops like a modern army of occupation. At first Roman soldiers had been Italians, but early in the history of the empire the legions began to be recruited in the provinces, though not at first in the province which they occupied and defended. Then finally, when the empire became peaceful and loyal, a legion obtained its recruits from the province in which it lived. Therefore the legions in Britain would be composed partly of Britons and would not be felt by the natives to be a foreign army.

As soon as they had conquered a province the Romans built roads through it for the use of their armies. In Britain, London was the centre of the road-system, and this was owing to its position at a point where the Thames can be crossed, and where the Thames valley leads inland to the heart of the country. From London the roads went south into Kent, north through Lincoln and York along the flat country east of the Pennines to Scotland, west to the Welsh border at Isca Silurum (Caerleon), and north-west to Deva (Chester). The Romans were skilled engineers, and no roads as good as theirs were built again till modern times. Along these roads trade and travellers could



HADRIAN'S WALL

*F. Frith & Co. Ltd*

pass easily, so one tribe was no longer cut off from another. This made it possible for civilisation to spread, and for one part of the country to become like another.

### THE LATER YEARS OF ROMAN RULE

About the end of the second century A.D. the northern frontier of Roman Britain was fixed at the line of Hadrian's Wall and the conquest of the country was ended. After this the Romans ruled Britain for the next two hundred years.

They kept peace within the island, but it was greatly troubled by foes from outside. Towards the end of the third century Saxon pirates began to raid the east coast, and in the north the Roman wall had to be defended against three different enemies. Saxons, Scots from Ireland, who were settling in northern Scotland, and the native Picts. The whole Empire had fallen into disorder, and for a few years, at the end of the century, Britain was independent of Rome under the rule of an adventurer, Carausius, whom the Romans had employed to defend her. Carausius was a sea-king whose power depended upon his navy, which had been given him by the Romans for use against Saxon pirates.

But Roman rule in Britain had not yet come to an end. The empire was re-organised by Diocletian (284-305) and his successor, Constantine (325-337). It was divided into two parts eastern and western. The Eastern Empire had its capital at Byzantium, which Constantine re-named "Constantinople," while Rome remained the capital of the Western Empire. Roman authority was restored in the provinces, and, in Britain, the rule of Carausius was ended. Officials were appointed to take charge of the defence of the island. These were the Count of the Saxon Shore, who was to deal with Saxon pirates, and the Duke of Britain, who was to guard the north from the Picts.

Constantine was the first Roman emperor to become a Christian, and a generation later Christianity became the religion of the empire. Probably there had been Christians in Britain as early as the second century, but of them, and even of the martyr, St. Alban, who lived in the third century and gave his name to the town of St Albans, we know little. But when Christianity became the religion of Rome it spread rapidly in Britain, and we hear of British bishops at the general Councils.

of the Church Yet the Christian Church in Britain was poor, its churches were small and plain, and it is probable that many Britons remained pagan

After the death of Constantine the Roman empire soon fell into disorder again It was invaded by barbarians, and torn by civil wars Generals in distant provinces tried to make themselves into emperors, and Britain produced some of these pretenders who took soldiers out of the country to fight for them, so that the Britons were left to defend themselves A Spaniard, Maximus, made himself emperor of Britain, Gaul and Spain, and defeated the Roman emperor Gratian, before he was himself overthrown At the beginning of the fifth century another pretender, Constantine, took most of the remaining Roman soldiers from Britain When the natives appealed to the Emperor Honorius for protection from their enemies (410) they were told to look after themselves, and so Roman rule in Britain came to an end, and the island was left to be conquered by barbarian invaders

The coming of these invaders probably destroyed the civilised life that the Romans had established in the south-west, so the Roman occupation of Britain seems to have had few lasting results Probably the Latin speech disappeared, the Roman towns and town life were destroyed, and almost everything Roman vanished except the roads and walls built by Roman engineers, and the ruins of towns and monuments Only an emasculated form of Christianity still remained among the Britons of the western part of the island

But in the rest of Europe Roman civilisation was never completely destroyed, and from Europe its influence was to spread to Britain again in later years

	<i>Events in Britain</i>	<i>Events outside Britain</i>	<i>Important Roman Emperors</i>
1st century B C			
100 75 50 25 B C 1 A D 1 25	55 and 54 Caesar's invasions  Period during which Romans visited and traded with Britain  43 Beginning of Roman conquest Plautius conquered south Conquest of Wales begun 60 Revolt of Boudica	Caesar's conquest in Gaul	41-54 Claudius
1st century A D			
75 50 50 60 75 100 125 150 175 200 225 250 275 300	78-85 Agricola completed conquest of Wales and began that of north  S W Britain Romanised Revolt in north suppressed and Hadrian's wall built Roman frontier pushed north and Wall of Pius built  Wars in North Britain Roman frontier moved back to Hadrian's wall, which Severus re-built End of Conquest Saxon raids on east coast 286-93 Carausius emperor of Britain	Civil wars and discord in empire Diocletian reorganised empire	54-68 Nero 69-79 Vespasian 79-81 Titus 81-96 Domitian  98-117 Trajan 117-138 Hadrian  138-161 Antonius Pius 161-180 Marcus Aurelius  180-193 Commodus 193-211 Severus
2nd century A D			
3rd century A D			

	<i>Events in Britain</i>	<i>Events outside Britain</i>	<i>Important Roman Emperors</i>
300	Attacks of Picts, Scots, and Saxons		
325	Constantine organised defences of Britain and divided it into provinces	Constantine completed reorganisation of empire	325-337 Constantine
350			
375	Maximus took troops from Britain to make himself emperor	Goths enter empire Defeat Romans at Adrianople, 378	
400	Constantine emperor in Britain Withdrew more troops In 410 Honorius told Britons to defend themselves		394 Honorius
425			
450			
475		410 Capture and sack of Rome by Alaric	

## CHAPTER II

### THE ENGLISH SETTLEMENT

#### BARBARIAN INVASIONS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

When Britain ceased to belong to the Roman Empire it was not because the Romans granted independence to her, but because the Western Roman Empire, which had its capital at Rome, was breaking up. The Eastern Empire, with its capital at Constantinople, was not destroyed till hundreds of years later, but barbarian tribes from the north and north-east invaded the Western Empire and settled in it, dividing it up into many kingdoms.

In northern Europe beyond the Roman frontier, which stretched along the Rhine and the Danube, lived the Teutonic tribes or "Germans," whom the Romans had never been able to conquer. These tribes lived in scattered communities or villages. Their huts were rude and primitive, and since they had few possessions or requirements they could move easily from one place to another. They were not savages, for they knew something about agriculture and were clever craftsmen and metal workers. The tribes near the coast had ships, and lived partly by piracy. These were the Saxon pirates who raided the coast of Britain in Roman times. All the Teutonic tribes were brave fighters, and though the Romans, who were better armed and disciplined usually defeated them in a pitched battle, Rome could never conquer their country, partly because of the thick forests that covered a large part of it.

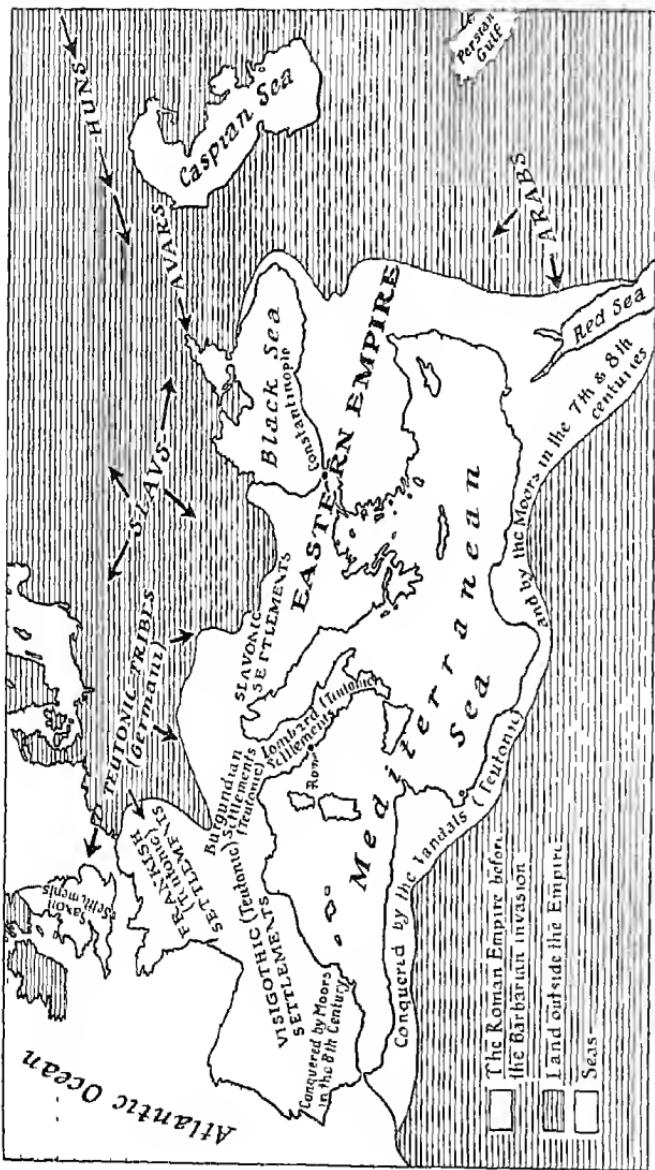
The northern frontier of the Roman Empire was strongly guarded, because it was the only barrier between the orderly, civilised world and the wild, little-known land of the barbarians. But there was not always fighting on this frontier, and in times of peace Roman traders went among the "Germans" and learnt a good deal about them. The Roman historian Tacitus greatly admired their simple lives, courage and virtues, and held them up as a model to his countrymen. He felt that the people of the Roman world were growing dangerously idle and over-civilised.

This was certainly true because, though great armies were needed to hold the frontiers of the Empire, it became so difficult to obtain soldiers that the government began to enlist barbarians to fight for them, until the picked troops of Rome were mostly barbarians who fought for money.

This meant that Rome came to rely upon barbarian troops to defend her against barbarians, which was obviously unwise. But it had one good result. The uncivilised people who fought for Rome were tremendously impressed by her power. Also they learnt something of the civilised life of the Romans and became themselves less wild. The same thing happened to those barbarian tribes who lived nearest to the borders of the Empire and had most to do with the Romans. Thus, when in the end the barbarians overran the Empire and conquered it, they tried to preserve in the kingdoms they set up as much as they could save of the Roman civilisation they had learnt to admire. It was this, and the survival of the Eastern Roman Empire, that saved the work of Rome in Europe from being swept away.

No one knows exactly why the Teutonic tribes began to move out of their own country. Whole nations of them began to wander through Europe with their families and possessions stowed into wagons, seeking new land to inhabit. They invaded the Roman Empire, and one nation after another swept over Roman territory. In the later years of the fourth century a Teutonic people, the Goths, defeated the Romans in the Battle of Adrianople (378). This battle showed that the Romans could no longer keep the barbarians outside their borders, and other barbarian tribes followed the Goths. Rome was sacked again and again, and the civilised, unwarlike people of the Empire suffered terribly at the hands of the invaders. The worst destruction of all was caused, not by the Teutonic nations, but by the Huns, a race of Mongol horsemen from Asia. Under their great king, Attila, the Huns swept over Europe in the first half of the fifth century, but were defeated in 451 in the battle of Châlons in Gaul, driven back and prevented from making themselves the rulers of Europe.

The Teutonic nations settled in various parts of the Empire and established kingdoms of their own. The Visigoths, a branch of the Gothic nation, settled in Spain and southern France, the Franks occupied northern France, and the Burgundians established themselves in the Rhone valley. The Lombards



THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE BARBARIAN SETTLEMENTS 4TH-7TH CENTURIES

The Roman Empire was the civilised capital western world around the Mediterranean. It was divided into the Western Empire with Rome as its capital, and the Eastern Empire with Constantinople as its capital. The Western Empire was invaded by barbarians, but the Eastern existed throughout the Middle Ages.

*Photo Vernacchi*

ATTILA AND HIS HUNS INVADING ROME



spread over Italy, giving their name to the Plain of Lombardy. But these Teutons were not the only settlers. Slav nations from Asia settled to the east of them, and gave a great deal of trouble to the Eastern Empire. Constantinople was threatened on its Asiatic side by the Arabs. These Arabs, who were Mohammedans, also conquered north Africa, and with the African Moors seized most of Spain in the seventh and eighth centuries. These Mohammedans might have overrun Europe if the Franks had not defeated them in the Battle of Tours in 732 and driven them back. Thus for hundreds of years Europe was constantly invaded by new races, who came to conquer and to settle, and the continual fighting and disorder caused by these invasions gained for this period of European history the name of the "Dark Ages."

### THE ENGLISH SETTLEMENT

Like the rest of the Western Empire Britain was invaded by barbarian tribes who settled in the country and established kingdoms of their own, though they did not succeed in overrunning the whole island. These invaders belonged to three different nations—Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. Their British enemies often classed them all together as "Saxons," and in later years they were all known as "English," a name which belonged only to the Angles. The name of the island was changed by them from "Britain" to "England."

Most of the new invaders of Britain came from the extreme north of Germany. The Saxons lived in the land to the south of the Jutland peninsula, now called Hanover. North of them, in the southern part of the peninsula itself, the modern Holstein, were the Angles. The whole nation of the Angles came to England, but part of the Saxon nation still remained in Germany. The people who were known in Britain as "Jutes" were probably a mixed band of adventurers, which included Jutes from the north of the Jutland peninsula, Frisians from Holland, and Franks from the Rhine round about Cologne. Since some of them came from the borders of the Empire the Jutes were more civilised than the Angles and Saxons, but on the whole the invaders of Britain were among the more savage and barbarous of the German tribes. They knew little or nothing of Roman civilisation and had no wish to preserve or imitate it. They



*From the painting by A. Forester By permission of the Keeper and Secretary of the London Museum*

ARRIVAL OF THE SAXONS BEFORE DESERTED LONDON, c. 530 AD

burnt and destroyed, making an end of the Roman towns in south-east Britain, and reducing the conquered areas to their own state of barbarism.

When Rome, invaded by the barbarians, could no longer spare troops and the Emperor Honorius told the Britons that they must defend themselves (410), they fought bravely against their enemies, the most troublesome of whom at this time were the Picts and Scots. Since the north and west of Britain had never been thoroughly Romanised, it was easy for the people of these parts to return completely to their old way of life, and when Roman authority was gone they were soon divided into independent Celtic kingdoms. About the year 450 we hear of a British king, Coroticus, in the north, who had a fleet and an army and hired barbarians to fight for him.

The practice of hiring barbarian soldiers proved as disastrous to the Britons as to the Romans. In 449 Vortigern, a British king, who ruled in South Wales, hired "Saxons" as the Britons called the barbarian pirates who had raided their coast since the third century, to help him to drive out the Picts and Scots from his country. Probably the army that he hired, which was led by a chief named Hengist, was made up of many bands of Saxon pirates who had united to make themselves stronger, and had chosen Hengist as a kind of war lord to lead them in battle.

Unfortunately for Vortigern and the Britons, the Saxons, once in the country, soon quarrelled with their new allies and began to overrun Britain, burning and sacking towns and killing the inhabitants. Nothing seemed able to stand against them. They made their way all over south-eastern Britain, the part of the island which had become really Roman, and destroyed the civilisation that the Romans had established there. They left the Roman towns in ruins, destroying them so completely that they remained unoccupied.

This harrying of south-eastern Britain did not take many years, and the Saxon raids spread as far as the west coast at the Mersey and the Bristol Channel. But these expeditions into the heart of the country were raids, not a real conquest, and when the Saxons began to settle in Britain their settlements were at first small and scattered. But the destruction they had wrought remained, the Britons had suffered terribly, and many of them fled overseas to Armorica, the modern Brittany, and settled there. The others rallied to defend themselves, and took for their leader

a Roman Briton, Ambrosius Aurelianus. According to fairly well established authority, another British leader was Arthur, about whom so many legends grew up later, both in England and in Brittany. He is supposed to have been the hero of a great victory at Mount Badon (c 516). This battle checked the raids of the Saxons and they began to make settlements in various parts of Britain. The British kingdoms in the west and north still remained independent though the south-east was lost to the Britons for ever.

### THE EARLY ENGLISH KINGDOMS

We know little about the establishment of the kingdoms of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes in south-eastern Britain. The invaders were barbarians who had no written histories, and the



ANGLO-SAXON POTTERY URNS

later writers who tried to set down an account of their coming had to depend upon traditions that were scanty and not always reliable.

Most of the new kingdoms were established during the first half of the sixth century, and by the middle of that century they stretched along the south and east coasts of Britain. The Jutes, who were the smallest, but the most civilised band of invaders, made only two settlements - a small one on the Hampshire coast and in the Isle of Wight, and a larger one in the kingdom of Kent. The kings of Kent claimed to be descendants of Hengist, the first war lord.

The Saxon kingdoms took their names from their position, e.g. West Saxons, East Saxons. Wessex, the kingdom of the West Saxons, was probably established by the army which the Britons defeated at Mount Badon (c 516). This army, checked

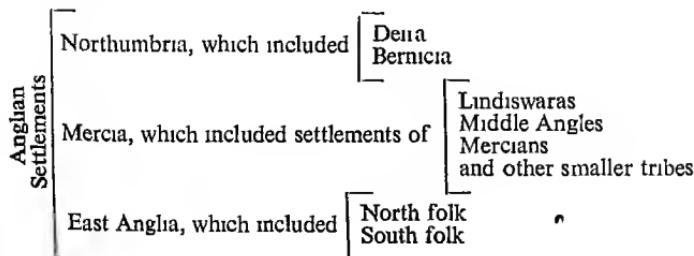
in its marsh westward, settled in the upper part of the Thames valley. From there Wessex spread southwards to the south coast under King Ceawlin (560-592) until it became the most important southern kingdom.

On the south coast between the Jutish settlements in Kent and Hampshire was the kingdom of the South Saxons, Sussex, established by a band of Saxons led by a chief named Aella. On the east coast, north of the Thames estuary, the East Saxons had their kingdom of Essex, to which the settlement of the Middle Saxons, Middlesex, also belonged.

The settlements of the Angles lay along the east coast of Britain to the north of those of the Saxons. Their most southerly kingdom was in that part of the country which is still known as East Anglia, and it was divided into two parts, the North folk (Norfolk) and the South folk (Suffolk). To the north and west of East Anglia were the settlements of the Lindiswaras, the Mercians, and the Middle Angles, who were finally united into one kingdom, Mercia, which stretched north to the Humber estuary.

To the north of the Humber, in modern Yorkshire, a band of Angles had settled in the second half of the fifth century, not many years after the quarrel between Vortigern and Hengist, and had founded the kingdom of Deira. About a hundred years later another band of Angles, under a king named Ida, established a small settlement on the Northumbrian coast which grew into the kingdom of Bernicia. Deira and Bernicia were sometimes independent of each other and sometimes united under one king. Together they formed the kingdom of Northumbria.

By the middle of the sixth century, therefore, the English invaders of Britain had established in the country the following kingdoms —



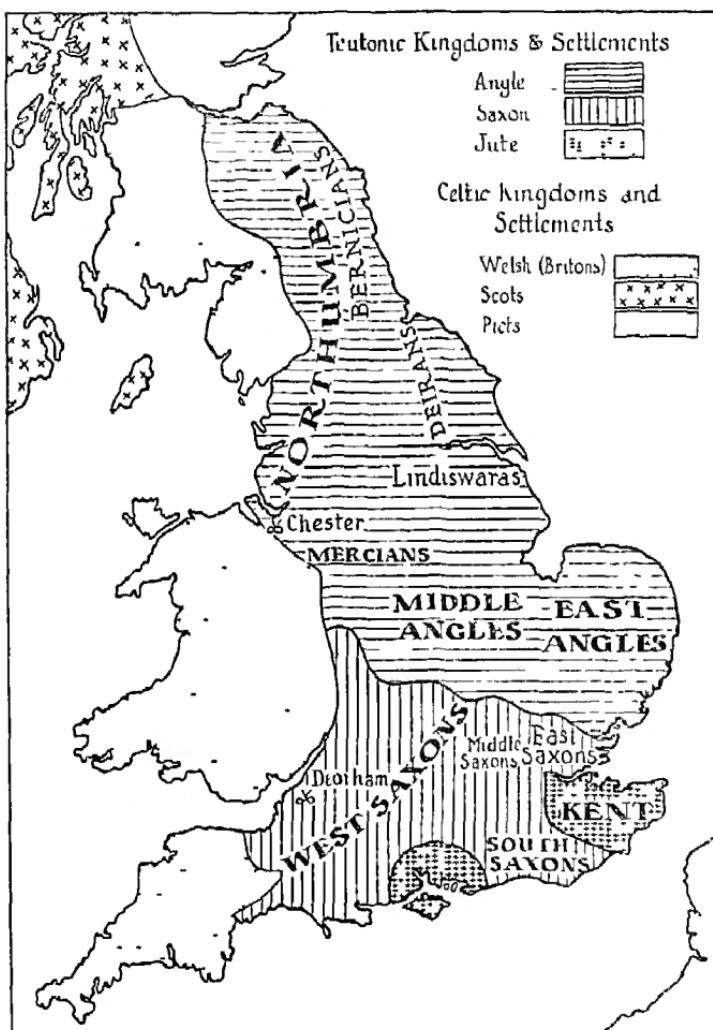
Saxon Settlements	Essex, to which belonged Middlesex Sussex Wessex, which grew larger and larger till it was the most important southern kingdom
Jutish Settlements	Kent Settlements in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, which became part of Wessex

Of these kingdoms Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex were the largest and most important, and, one after another were to obtain in later years the overlordship of the rest of England

### EXPANSION OF WESSEX AND NORTHUMBRIA

After the English had established their settlements there was constant fighting in Britain. The newcomers fought against the Britons, to whom they gave the name of "Welsh," and also at times against each other. Each kingdom was independent, but sometimes several kingdoms took the king of one of them as the common leader in war. This position, which was that of a general or war-lord, was a relic of the days when the English had joined together in one army to harry Britain. Hengist had been the first war-lord, another was Aella, a king of the South Saxons, and then, in times about which we know more, came Ceawlin, King of Wessex (560-590), who was followed by Ethelbert of Kent.

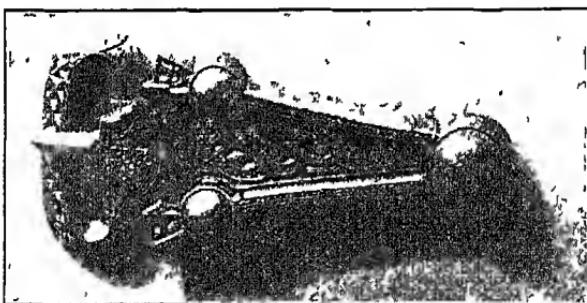
These war-lords might be chosen from any kingdom, and even from a very small one. Probably they obtained the position because they were good soldiers. Good leadership was necessary to the English, for the Celtic kingdoms in the west were still strong and flourishing. There were Welsh (or British) kingdoms in Cornwall and in Dorset. There were kings in North Wales and in South Wales, and in the border district known as Powys. There was a very strong Welsh kingdom, called Reged, in the Lake District, and even one in Yorkshire in the district round Leeds, called Elmet. North of Hadrian's Wall, in the Lowlands, the kingdom which had been ruled by Coroticus still survived and was known as Alclyde. The Picts and Scots of the north were further removed from the English, but even they at times joined with the Welsh against them. So the conquest of England was still very far from being completed.



ENGLAND ABOUT 613 A.D.

The Welsh (Britons) were driven west and separated as the English kingdoms spread. Scots from Ireland settled in the west of Scotland.

During the second part of the sixth century the kingdom of Wessex spread very rapidly under the rule of its king, Ceawlin (560-592). Ceawlin was quite as ready to fight against English as against Welsh. In 568 he defeated Ethelbert of Kent at Wibbandun (Wimbledon), and in 571 conquered some English settlements north of the Thames. He also extended his kingdom to the south coast. After this he turned against the Welsh in the west, and defeated three of their kings in the Battle of Dyrham (577), extending Wessex in the west to the shore of the Bristol Channel. His battles were important because they made Wessex into a large and strong kingdom. Also the expansion of Wessex to the west after Dyrham cut off the Welsh of the Cornish peninsula from those of South Wales, so that the hold of the Welsh on the west coast was weakened.



ANGLO-SAXON BUCKLE OF SILVER-GILT, GOLD INTERLACED WORK

About the same time there was a great deal of fighting between English and Welsh in the north. The new settlement of Bernicia made by Ida, had a hard struggle to hold its own against the Welsh. Ida and his twelve sons fought constantly against Urien, the powerful king of Reged, and his son, Owen. But Bernicia survived and grew so strong that Ethelric, the last of Ida's sons, seized Deira on the death of its king, Aella, and drove out Aella's son, Edwin.

Ethelric's son, Ethelfrith (593-617), who succeeded to the kingdom of all Northumbria, was one of the greatest of the early English kings. He invaded the kingdom of Reged, and was so successful that the Welsh asked help from the Scots. In 603 Ethelfrith was attacked by the forces of the Scots, and of the Welsh of Reged and Alclyde, and defeated them at Dawston, in

Liddesdale After that his kingdom included the east Lowlands as far north as the Firth of Forth, and stretched west to Carlisle

Ethelfrith then marched towards the Dee, and defeated the Welsh at Chester (613), so that Northumbria touched the west coast between the Ribble and the Dee, separating the Welsh of the north from those in Wales

Thus the last years of the sixth century and the first years of the seventh saw the development of Wessex and Northumbria into large and powerful kingdoms At the same time, after Chester and Dyrrham, the Welsh were split into three sections, those of the Cornish peninsula, those of Wales, and those of the north After this the predominance of the English in the island was assured.

	<i>Britannia (England)</i>		<i>Western Europe</i>
400			
410	Honorius told Britons to defend themselves		Roman Empire invaded by Goths,
c 449	Vortigern employed Saxons against Picts and Scots		Vandals, and Huns
	English ravaged south-eastern Britain	Roman civilisation destroyed	451 Huns defeated at Chalons
450			Settlement of Franks in Gaul
500			
c 516	Battle of <i>Mt Badon</i> English checked in W Britain	English settlements established in Britain	
550			
560.	Ceawlin King of Wessex (till 592)		
568	Battle of <i>Witton</i> Wessex defeated Kent		
577	Battle of <i>Dyrham</i> Welsh of Wales cut off from Welsh of Cornwall	Expansion of Wessex	
588	Bernicia and Deira united		Period of barbarian invasion and settlement
593.	Ethelfrith King of Northumbria (till 617)		
600			
603	Battle of <i>Dawston</i> Ethelfrith defeated Scots and Welsh	Expansion of Northumbria	
613	Battle of <i>Chester</i> Welsh of Wales cut off from northern Welsh		Lombards settle in Italy
625			

## CHAPTER III

### THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND

#### CELTIC CHRISTIANITY

When the barbarian nations invaded the Roman empire many of them, who had lived near to its borders and had had much to do with the Romans were already Christians. But the more northerly barbarians were still heathen, and among them were the English tribes who invaded Britain.

When Britain became independent of Rome the Christian church was already well established there, so, while the English kingdoms in the east and south of the island were heathen, the Welsh kingdoms in the west and north remained Christian, each with its own bishop.

The Welsh hated the English bitterly for the destruction they had caused, and there was continual enmity and warfare between the two nations. So strong was their hatred that they made no effort to convert the newcomers, and were content to let them remain heathens. But in the first half of the fifth century, before the English settled in Britain, St Ninian, a native of north Wales had converted the southern Picts, who lived in Galloway, and during the same period the Briton, St Patrick, converted Ireland.

In Ireland Christianity spread rapidly, and the country became known as the "Isle of Saints". The Irish Christians established many monasteries, for the practice of abandoning the world to lead a religious life in a monastery was now common in all Christian countries. In Ireland the Church was ruled by the abbots of monasteries and by bishops who were attached to monasteries instead of having a see of their own. The Irish monasteries were, therefore, a powerful and important part of the Church. They became centres of learning, which students of other nations visited for instruction. At this time all books were copied by hand, and the Irish monks produced a particularly beautiful style of writing which was later copied by the English and remained the national hand of England until the Norman conquest.

The early Irish church was famous not only for learning but for missionary work. Irish missionaries visited many parts of Europe, establishing monasteries as far from Ireland as Switzerland and Italy. About the year 565 St Columba, a native of northern Ireland, converted the Scots of north-western Scotland, and built a famous monastery on Iona, off the Argyleshire coast.

Thus, by the second half of the sixth century, Irish, Welsh, Picts, and Scots were acquainted with Christianity, and only the English kingdoms remained completely heathen.

### THE MISSION OF AUGUSTINE

The English kingdoms remained heathen till the sixth century was almost at an end. Then in the year 597 Pope Gregory the Great sent a monk named Augustine to begin their conversion. Augustine was not eager to trust himself among heathen barbarians, and turned back to Rome when he was half way across Europe, but Gregory who was himself a man of great courage and energy would not let him abandon his mission.

Augustine's fears were unfounded, because the English showed no hostility towards Christian missionaries. Their belief in their own gods does not seem to have been strong, and the ideas of Christianity cannot have been altogether new to them, since their neighbours, the Welsh in western Britain and the Franks in Europe, were both Christian. Also Ethelbert of Kent had married a Frankish princess, Bertha, who was permitted to bring her own priest with her to England.

Ethelbert was the king whom Ceawlin of Wessex had defeated at Wibbandun in 568, and he had succeeded Ceawlin as war-lord of the English kingdoms of the south. This made him a person of special importance, and for that reason, and because he had a Christian wife, it was to his court that Augustine came to begin his missionary work (597). Ethelbert received him kindly and was quite willing to hear him, but only in the open air, as he thought that Augustine and his monks might be sorcerers. Three months after the mission came to England the king was baptised, and most of the kingdom of Kent followed his example, though Ethelbert did not try to force his subjects to accept Christianity. Augustine established himself at Canterbury, the chief town of Ethelbert's kingdom, and



*Will F. Taylor*

MONUMENT TO ST. AUGUSTINE, EBBSFELD CROSS, KENT

held his services in the ruins of a church that had been built by the Romans, and which the English now restored.

When the western Roman empire was broken up by the barbarian invasions the Christian Church in the west remained united, and the Christians of the new barbarian kingdoms belonged to one Church, of which the Pope, or Bishop of Rome, was acknowledged to be the head. The English converts of Augustine also belonged to the Roman Church, but the Celtic Christians of west and north Britain and of Ireland ruled themselves after their own fashion. Augustine, to whom Pope Gregory had granted authority over all other bishops in England, felt that he ought to do something to bring the Welsh Church under the control of Rome. Therefore he arranged to meet the Welsh clergy, hoping that he might be able to come to some agreement with them.

The difference between the customs of the Welsh and Roman churches were not important, the most notable being that they celebrated Easter at different dates. Probably if this had been the only thing that troubled the Welsh, Augustine would have made terms with them. But the Welsh bishops were used to rule themselves, and they did not wish to have Augustine set over them. When, at the meetings which he had arranged, he did not rise to greet them, but remained seated, they decided that he was proud and overbearing and they would not listen to his arguments. Augustine tried to persuade them to change the date of their Easter, but they would make no concessions to him. Thus after the mission of Augustine, there were two churches in England, that of the Celtic Christians in the west and north, and that of the Roman Christians in the south-east.

#### NORTHUMBRIA CONVERSION AND SUPREMACY

While Augustine and his monks were converting Kent and the neighbouring kingdoms of Essex and East Anglia, Ethelfrith of Northumbria (593-617) was making himself supreme in the north of England by his victories over the Scots and the Welsh.

Ethelfrith's father, when he united Northumbria, had driven out Edwin, the heir to the kingdom of Deira. Edwin went to live at the court of King Redwald of East Anglia. Redwald was an energetic king and a good soldier, and when Ethelbert of Kent died in 616 he succeeded him as leader of the southern

English kingdoms. He then made war on Ethelfrith and defeated and killed him, driving his sons out of Northumbria and placing Edwin of Deira on the throne.

Edwin (617-633) was a great soldier, and when Redwald of East Anglia died not long after his victory over Ethelfrith, he soon took his place as leader of the English kingdoms. In 625 he married Ethelburga of Kent, and since she was a Christian she brought with her a chaplain, named Paulinus, who had been ordained a bishop, in the hope that he might convert the Northumbrians.

But Edwin was not easily converted. He insisted on taking time to think things out for himself, and when in 627 he decided to accept Christianity he held a council of his advisers to discuss the matter. Curiously enough it was the pagan high-priest, Coifi, who showed himself most ready to become a Christian, because, he said, he had served his own gods faithfully and they had done nothing to reward his service. When the Northumbrians had agreed to be baptised, it was Coifi who superintended the burning of the heathen temples and the destruction of idols. Paulinus was made Bishop of York.

During the seventh century Northumbria was the most powerful and important kingdom in England. Ethelfrith had extended its borders in the north to the Firth of Forth, and in the west to the coast. Edwin forced Mercia and East Anglia to do homage to him, and later Wessex and the kingdoms of the Welsh. To guard his northern frontier he built the fortress of Edinburgh (Edwin's burgh) on the Firth of Forth. Having become such a powerful king he lived with a pomp and show that impressed his subjects. He also proved as efficient a ruler as he had been a soldier, and kept peace and order throughout Britain, a thing that no one had been able to do since Roman times.

In spite of Edwin's good government some of the kingdoms subject to him were anxious to regain their independence. Mercia, the central English kingdom, was becoming strong and united under its king, Penda. In 633 Penda made an alliance with a Welsh king, Cadwallon, who ruled Gwynedd (North Wales), and they invaded Northumbria, defeating and killing Edwin at Heathfield (Hatfield, near Doncaster). After this the two kings ravaged Northumbria in a very cruel manner and succeeded in stamping out Christianity there, for Penda and

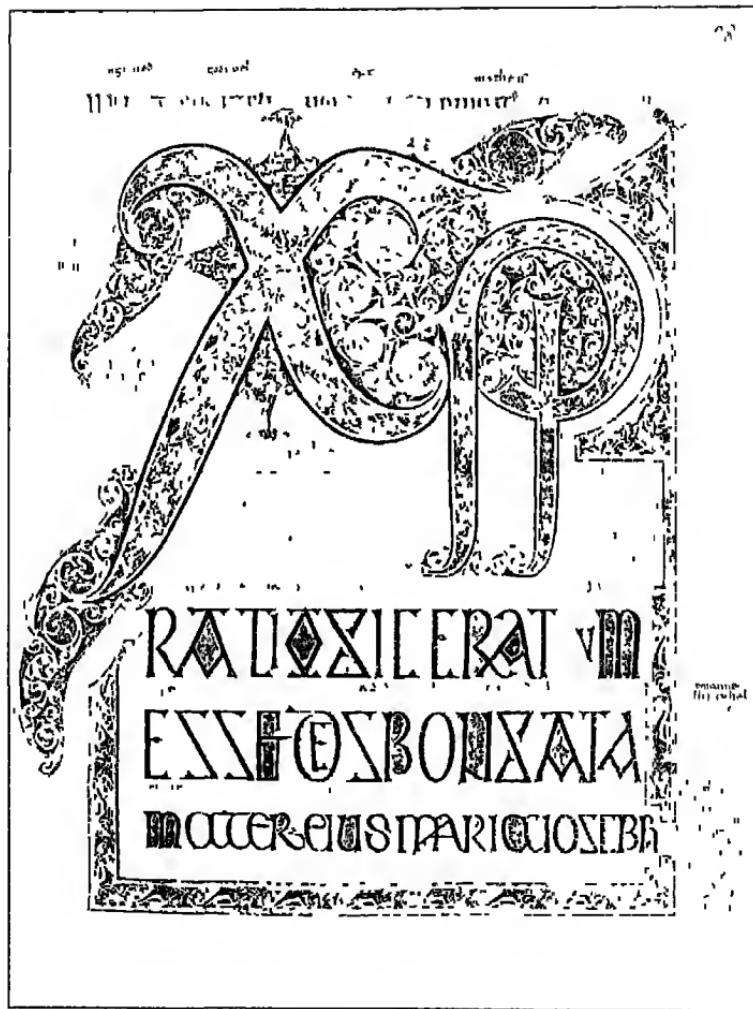
Mercia were still heathen, while Welsh Christians, like Cadwallon, were hostile to the English Christians converted by Rome

After this Northumbria fell into disorder and was for some time dominated by Cadwallon and the Welsh. Then, in 634, Oswald, who was a son of Ethelfrith and had been in exile during Edwin's reign, defeated and killed the Welsh king at the Heaven-field, near Hexham, and made himself ruler of Northumbria.

When Oswald became king he found Northumbria once more a heathen kingdom. During his exile he had learnt Christianity from the Scots of the north. The Scots had been converted in the sixth century by the Irish monk, St Columba, who built the monastery of Iona on the west coast of Scotland. Oswald now sent to Iona for a missionary to preach to his subjects. In answer to his request St Aidan came to re-convert the Northumbrians, and built a monastery on the island of Lindisfarne, off the Northumbrian coast. The form of Christianity he taught was the Celtic Christianity of the Welsh, Scots, and Irish. So Celtic Christianity was introduced into Northumbria while the southern English kingdoms belonged to the Roman Church. But Mercia still remained a heathen kingdom.

Oswald claimed the overlordship of England, but Penda of Mercia continued to hold out against him. In 642 Penda defeated and killed him at Maser felth (Oswestry). After this Penda was for a while supreme in England, but in 655, after invading Northumbria he was defeated and killed at Winwaed-field, near Leeds, by Oswy, Oswald's brother. After the death of Penda the Mercians were converted to Christianity. Oswy could not keep them long in subjection, and though he was certainly the most powerful king in England he did not control the midlands and the south.

His reign is chiefly remembered for the important Synod of the Church held at Whitby in 664 to decide whether Northumbria should belong to the Roman or to the Celtic Church. Members of the two churches quarrelled continually about the time when Easter should be celebrated, and in one year it was kept twice. Each Church was inclined to regard the other with dislike and contempt, so Oswy desired that the matter should be finally decided. At the synod the Celtic party was represented by Colman, a Scot who was Bishop of Lindisfarne, and the Roman party by St Wilfrid, Abbot of Ripon. Wilfrid had been educated at Lindisfarne, but later had gone to Rome



*British Museum*

A PAGE FROM THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS

A beautiful illuminated manuscript which is said to have been written at  
Lindisfarne or Holy Island in Northumbria

to study, and had become a zealous advocate of the Roman Church. He was a clever and vigorous man, but he must have been hasty-tempered and difficult, because his life was passed in many quarrels. He seems to have been able to out-argue Colman, possibly because he was more learned, since he had studied in Rome and France. But the whole question was decided, not by the arguments of the clergy, but by Oswy's own assertion that, since the keys of heaven had been given to St Peter, it was better to belong to St Peter's Church, that is, the Church of Rome, as the good will of heaven's doorkeeper was worth having. So the Northumbrians joined the Roman Church, and Colman returned to Scotland in anger, taking with him those of the clergy who would not give up their Celtic practices.

From this time all the English kingdoms belonged to the Roman Church, and the fact that they had one religious organisation helped to draw them together. In 669 Pope Vitalian sent a Greek from Asia Minor, Theodore of Tarsus, to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Theodore was already old when he came to England, but, till his death in 690, he worked very hard to organise the English Church. He brought with him an African monk, Abbot Hadrian, who was a renowned Greek and Latin scholar, and for some time Greek as well as Latin was studied at Canterbury.

Theodore found that the Church was doing little for the people of England. There were many monasteries, but few parish priests. He tried to increase the number of parish priests, and created many new bishoprics, so that the work of the Church should be better supervised. The changes which he made caused him to quarrel with Wilfrid, who was now Bishop of York, and Wilfrid left Northumbria, and went to convert the South Saxons.

By this time the power of Northumbria was declining, and when Oswy's successor, Egfrith, was killed at Nectansmere (685) in a battle with the Picts, Northumbria's supremacy in England came to an end.

### THE SUPREMACY OF MERCIA

During the eighth century Mercia was the most important of the English kingdoms. Northumbria had fallen into disorder. There were no fixed rules for deciding who should be king.

there, so there were many civil wars and struggles for the crown. The nobles were powerful and unruly. Altogether, Northumbria was too disorganised and weak to be able to exert any control over the rest of England.

During the first years of the century it seemed as if Wessex under its King Ine (688-726) was likely to take the first place in England. Ine forced Essex, Kent, and Sussex to pay homage to him, and, marching west, attacked the Welsh of the Cornish peninsula and conquered what is now Devonshire.

But in the year 733 Wessex was defeated by Ethelbald of Mercia (716-757) and forced to do homage to him. This victory made Ethelbald supreme in England south of the Humber and gave Mercia the first place among the English states. At home Ethelbald was a just and able ruler, though he was not very scrupulous. He kept his supremacy for nearly twenty years till he was defeated by Wessex at Burford (752). In 757 he was murdered, and succeeded by his son Offa, the greatest of the Mercian kings.

Offa (757-796) made war successfully against both English and Welsh. He defeated Kent at the Battle of Otford (774) and Wessex at Bensington (777). This made him overlord of southern England, and while the overlordship of earlier kings was probably more a matter of receiving formal homage than of exercising real authority Offa seems to have had a good deal of power over his subject kingdoms.

Offa also carried on many wars against the Welsh. To keep them out of his kingdom he built an earthen rampart along the Welsh border, from the Severn to the Dee, and the remains of this are still known as "Offa's Dyke".

Since the Archbishopric of Canterbury was in Kent and that of York in Northumbria, Offa felt that the church in Mercia was left in a subordinate position, and persuaded the Pope to create a new archbishopric at Lichfield. This split the English church into three provinces instead of two, but after Offa's death the new archbishopric was allowed to disappear. This was an advantage, for when different kingdoms belonged to the same province of the Church and had their religious organisation in common, they were drawn together and were more likely to unite. If each nation had had its own archbishopric England might have remained divided into separate kingdoms for a much longer time.

In Europe as in England Offa was regarded as a great king, and Charles the Great, the ruler who built up a Frankish empire at this time, treated him as an equal. After his death, his successor Kenwulf (796-821) managed to retain control of southern England, but at the end of Kenwulf's reign civil wars began. Mercian supremacy, which had arisen chiefly because of the vigour and ability of the kings of Mercia was soon at an end.

### ENGLISH LEARNING IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY

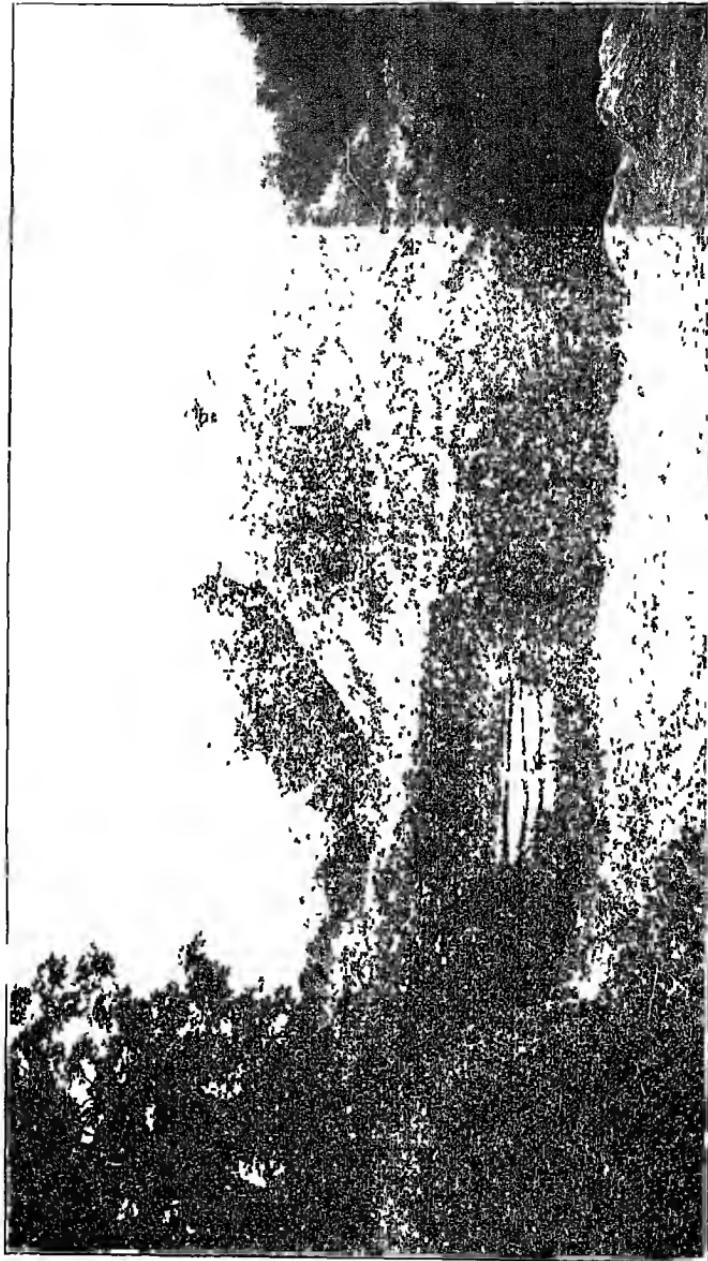
During the eighth century the English Church, which had been established and organised during the seventh century, became renowned for its learning and its missionaries. The tribes of Frisia and northern Germany were still heathen, and it was English and Irish monks who went among them to spread Christianity. It was an Englishman, St Willibrord, who converted many of the Frisians, and another, Suidbert, who preached to the Hessians. But the most renowned of all these missionaries was a West Saxon, named Winfrith, who was later known as St Boniface. He spent so much of his life working among the heathen German tribes north of the Rhine that he was known as the "Apostle to the Germans," and became their bishop.

The English Church was also renowned for its learning. Though Mercia was the most powerful English kingdom in the eighth century, Northumbria remained the most cultured and learned. In the south St Augustine had established a school at Canterbury, and after Theodore of Tarsus and Abbot Hadrian came to England, both Greek and Latin were taught there, but this school of Roman learning never had much general influence, while the monasteries and churchmen of Northumbria were known throughout Europe for their learning and culture.

Books were copied by hand in monasteries, and the monks of Northumbria produced beautifully written and decorated volumes, written in the hand that they had learnt from Irish missionaries. There were also great poets and authors among them. In the second half of the seventh century Caedmon, who was attached to the abbey of Whitby, wrote a poem about the Creation. Bede, a monk of Jarrow, who died in 735, was the author of an "Ecclesiastical History" from which we learn most of what is known about the early history of the English kingdoms. Men travelled far and underwent great hardships

*Will F Taylor*

OFFA'S DYKE ALONG THE WELSH BORDER

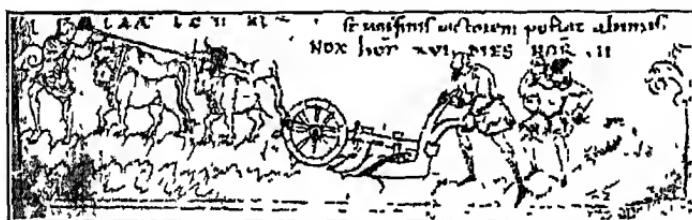


to obtain new books or information Bede's friend, Benedict Biscop, who was Abbot of Wearmouth, made six journeys to Rome

When Charles the Great (768-814) who ruled the Franks and built up an empire that included modern France, Germany, and most of Italy, desired to arrange for the education of his subjects, he sent to England for Alcuin of York to teach them. Thus the English helped to spread learning as well as Christianity in Europe. The literary work and culture of the northern English monasteries contrasts strangely with the barbarous and futile civil wars that weakened and disordered Northumbria in the eighth century.

### THE RISE OF WESSEX

The supremacy of Mercia over the rest of England came to an end soon after the death of Offa's successor, Kenwulf in 821



PLoughing the Open Fields of the Medieval Manor

From British Museum MS Cott. Julius A VI

After this the Mercian kings were men of little vigour and ability, and they were faced by a stronger ruler, Egbert of Wessex (802-839), whom they could not withstand.

We know little of the way in which Egbert's early years had been spent, except that he had been driven out of England by Offa, and had lived for some time at the court of Charles the Great, the builder of the Frankish empire. There he would be able to watch the methods by which an empire could be built up from a number of independent nations and tribes, and he would learn much that must have been of use to him in his work of uniting England. For it was Egbert who made Wessex supreme over the other English kingdoms and became the ancestor of a line of Saxon rulers, some of whom were kings of all England.

Egbert, who was to make Wessex supreme, was not a young man when he came to the throne in 802, and it was not until after the death of Kenwulf of Mercia in 821 that his kingdom became independent of Mercian rule. He employed himself in wars against the Welsh of the Cornish peninsula. After the death of Kenwulf Mercia was weakened by civil wars, and the other English kingdoms freed themselves from her authority. Then in 825 Egbert defeated the Mercians in the Battle of Ellendun, and Wessex took the place of Mercia as the leading English kingdom.

After this, Kent, Sussex and East Anglia submitted to Wessex, but Egbert was not content with the overlordship of these minor kingdoms, and in 829 he invaded Mercia and subdued the whole kingdom, making himself ruler of England south of the Humber. Then Northumbria offered him homage, and this gave him control of the north of England.

As under the supremacy of Northumbria and Mercia, the dependent kingdoms had, as a rule, kings of their own, though these were under Egbert's control and were often chosen by him. Thus the different nations of the English retained their individuality, and might very well, had the power of Wessex lessened, have regained their independence. But at this time a new period of English history began in which the English were forced by a common danger to hold closely together, and in which national differences were swept away in the disorder that followed the arrival of a new invader. For, before the end of Egbert's reign the raids of the Vikings upon England began.

	<i>England</i>	<i>Western Europe, etc</i>
500	English settlements in Britain	
550	Expansion of Wessex	
600	Expansion of Northumbria	
650	Supremacy of Northumbria	
700		
516	Battle of <i>Mt Badon</i> English checked in W Britain and began to settle	
560	Ceawlin King of Wessex (till 592)	
	Ethelbert King of Kent (till 516)	
568	Battle of <i>Wibbandum</i> Wessex defeated Kent	St Columba converted Scots
577	Battle of <i>Dyrham</i> Ceawlin defeated Welsh	of N W Scotland
588	Bernicia and Deira united	
593	Ethelfrith King of Northumbria (till 617)	
597	St Augustine's mission and conversion of Kent	
603	Battle of <i>Dawston</i> Ethelfrith defeated Scots and Welsh	
613	Battle of <i>Chester</i> Ethelfrith defeated Welsh	
617	Edwin King of Northumbria (till 653)	
625	Mission of Paullinus to Nor- thumbria	
626	Penda King of Mercia (till 655)	
627	Conversion of Northumbria to Roman Christianity	
633	Battle of <i>Heathfield</i> Edwin killed	
634	Battle of <i>Heavenfield</i> Oswald succeeded Edwin Northumbria converted by Aidan to Celtic Christianity	
642	Battle of <i>Maserfelth</i> Oswald killed Succeeded by Oswy	
655	Battle of <i>Winwaefield</i> Penda killed	
664	Synod of <i>Whitby</i> North- umbria joined Roman Church	Conver- sion of Mercia
671	Oswy succeeded by Elfrith	
685	Battle of <i>Nectansmere</i> End of Northumbrian supremacy	English Church organised by Theodore of Tarsus
		Lombards settled in Italy
		Rise of Mohammedanism
		Mohammedan Arabs conquer North Africa
		Period of barbarian settlement

	<i>England</i>	<i>Western Europe, etc.</i>
700		
716	Ethelbald King of Mercia (till 757)	Moors and Arabs invade and conquer Spain
733	Ethelbald defeated Wessex      Mercia supreme south of Humber	732 Battle of Tours Arab invasions of Gaul checked
750	752 Battle of <i>Burford</i> Wessex defeated Mercia	
	757 Offa King of Mercia (till 796)	
800	Supremacy of Mercia	768 Charlemagne King of Franks (till 814)
800	744 Battle of <i>Oxford</i> Offa defeated Kent	Building up of great Frankish empire by Charlemagne
800	777 Battle of <i>Bensington</i> Offa defeated Wessex	
800	796 Kenwulf King of Mercia (till 821)	
800	802 Egbert King of Wessex (till 839)	800 Charlemagne crowned Emperor at Rome
850	Supremacy of Wessex	
850	825. Battle of <i>Ellendun</i> End of Mercian supremacy	
850	829 Egbert conquered Mercia and received homage of Northumbria	

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DANISH INVASIONS

#### THE VIKINGS

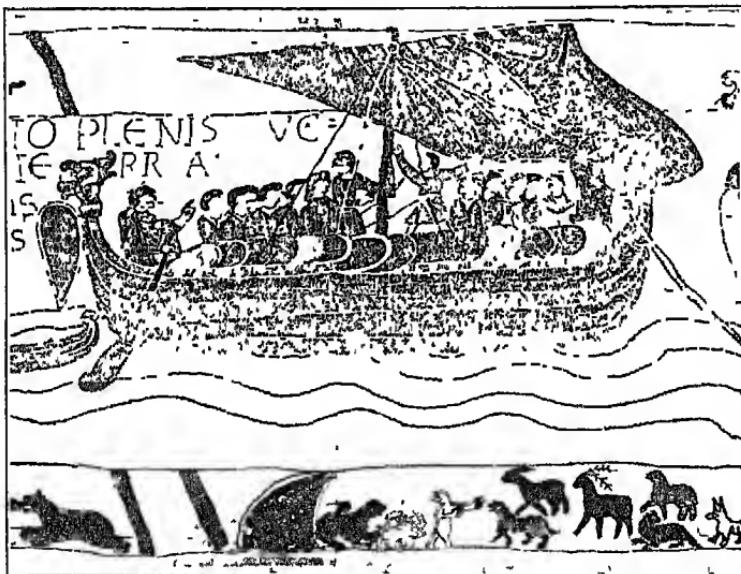
By the end of the eighth century it seemed that western Europe was at last recovering from the long period of disorder that followed the downfall of the Roman empire. The barbarian nations had settled in their new homes, the advance of the Mohammedan Arabs and Moors into Europe had been checked by the Franks in the Battle of Tours (732), Christianity had spread, and with it the influence of the Church's ideals and well organised government. Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, a ruler of the Franks, had extended his dominions till they included most of western Europe, except Spain and southern Italy. Having become so powerful he thought of reviving the empire of the Romans, and in 800 the Pope crowned him Emperor at Rome.

England, too, was becoming more united, for the influence of the Church linked one nation to another. Learning had accompanied the spread of Christianity and the monasteries of Ireland and of Northumbria were famous throughout Europe. Altogether, things looked very hopeful for peace and civilisation when a new set of invaders came from northern Europe and made the ninth century a time of terror and disorder.

These invaders, the Vikings, came from Scandinavia and from the Jutland Peninsula. They are often spoken of as "Danes," or "Norsemen," as if all of them belonged to one race, but in reality they included men from four nations—Danes, Norwegians or Norsemen, Swedes, and Goths. These four nations were closely related to each other, spoke very similar languages, and had the same religion and customs. Their life on the shores of the many inlets of the Scandinavian coast had forced them to become good seamen. They had always been pirates, but until the end of the eighth century they had not troubled the rest of Europe much, being split into a great number of tiny kingdoms, which had fought with and raided each other. But as their countries became more united, and there were fewer

small tribal wars, the ships of the Vikings went further for their plunder. Piracy and sea-roving were considered by them to be the normal existence of a brave man. They had no respect for peace, and their religion taught them that it was shameful for a man not to die in battle.

The gods of the Vikings were like their worshippers, and the tales told of them were stories of battles, magic, wanderings and adventures, great feasts, and encounters with marvellous monsters. The Viking who was killed in battle went to join his



*Victoria and Albert Museum*

#### A VIKING SHIP FROM THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY

gods, Thor, Odin, Frey, and the rest, where they feasted in Valhalla, the hall of heroes. Thus, to the Vikings, war was a part of their religion, and if a man had no quarrel to fight in at home he went somewhere else to seek one. A peaceable man was despised. Naturally, people with these ideas were dangerous to a settled civilisation such as was beginning to appear once more in Europe. On the other hand they were bold, hardy, and adventurous, and, once they had settled in a country and become converted to Christianity, they were a valuable

addition to the population. In spite of their craving for risk, and excitement, they had shrewd brains, were clever traders, and wonderful organisers, so that countries in which the Vikings settled were governed with peculiar efficiency.

At home the Vikings lived simply in small settlements, and farmed their land. They were skilful craftsmen, but most of the things they made were for use rather than luxury. Such luxuries as they possessed were usually obtained by their pirate raids upon the more civilised countries of the south. But their interest in war made them into skilled metal workers, and they spent much time and care in forging and decorating their weapons. They were good ship-builders also, and the Viking ship was a beautiful piece of work which would endure voyages across the open ocean. But their largest vessels were no more than open boats, which would carry a crew of about 120 men. Although the vessels had a sail that could be lifted in a favourable wind, they depended chiefly upon oars for their progress.

The people of western Europe learnt to dread the Viking ships and their crews. Often the raiders came in small numbers, but each man was a trained fighter, well-armed and defended by a steel cap and a shirt of chain mail, while among the other nations of Europe only men of importance wore defensive armour. The Vikings made their raids unexpectedly, and often there were only untrained local levies to oppose them. Before other soldiers could be fetched the pirates were gone again. For some time after their attacks began they came only as raiders and in small bands, but later, like the English invaders of Britain, they began to unite into armies under a single leader, to leave their ships, and to ravage whole provinces. Later still, they began to conquer and settle, establishing small states or kingdoms of their own.

The Viking raids extended over the greater part of Europe, but the different races of Vikings sailed, as a rule, along different routes and to different countries. The Swedes and Goths sailed east up the Baltic and attacked the Slavs and the Finns. Turning their ships into the rivers they entered Russia and crossed it. Some of them fought as paid soldiers for the Eastern Emperor of Constantinople. In the second half of the ninth century the Swede, Rurik, established the kingdom of Russia, and built himself the city of Novgorod as its capital.

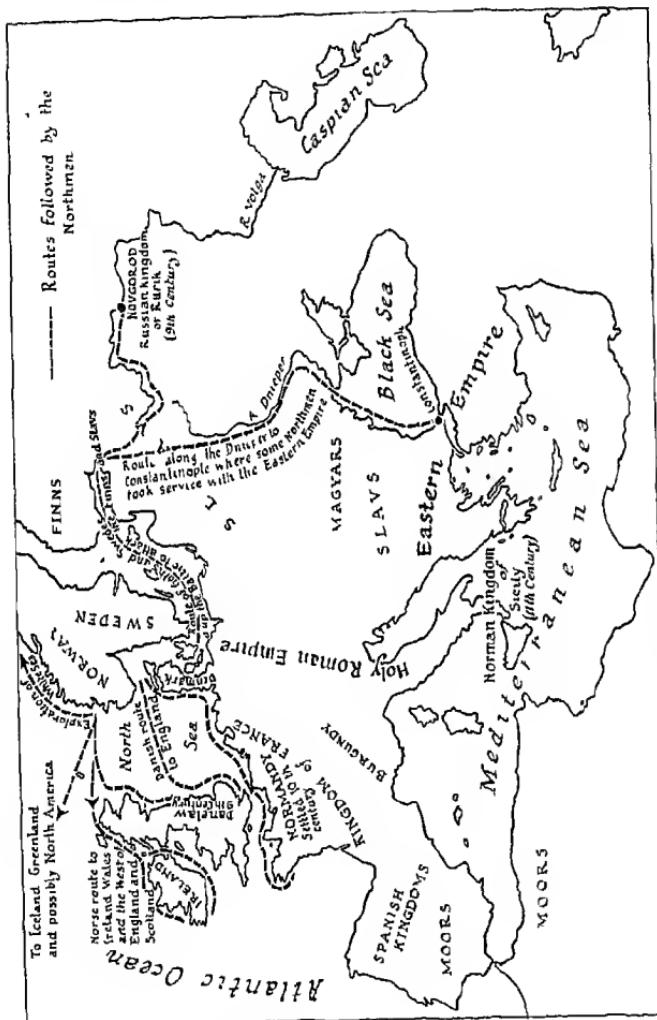
It is with the raids of the Danes and of the Norwegians, or Norsemen, that English history has most to do. The Norse pirates sailed round the north of England and attacked Ireland, Wales, and the west coast of England and Scotland. In Ireland, which was divided among many tribes and kings, no united resistance could be made to them, and they established towns and small kingdoms of their own. It was from Ireland that many of their raids upon the English coast were made. They burnt and sacked the Irish monasteries, and so Ireland ceased to be a centre of learning. The Danes invaded England and the lands of the Franks, where the empire of Charles the Great was breaking up and civil war was often added to the disorder which they caused. At the beginning of the tenth century they made their famous settlement in France which is known as Normandy. Even after that they did not lose their tendency to seek out new countries, and about a hundred years later Norman adventurers seized southern Italy, and then conquered Sicily. In the second half of the eleventh century the Normans conquered England. It is even said that Vikings from Iceland sailed as far as North America.

### DANISH SETTLEMENTS IN ENGLAND

In the year 789, when Offa was king of Mercia, three shiploads of Vikings landed on the south coast of England near Wareham. The local sheriff came to fetch them to the town so that they might explain who they were and what they wanted, but the Vikings killed him instead of obeying. This was the first time the Saxons encountered these northern pirates whom they learnt to know so well. A few years later Vikings appeared on the Northumbrian coast and sacked the monasteries of Lindisfarne and Jarrow. After this they discovered how much plunder could be obtained from the rich and undefended Irish monasteries, and for the next thirty years they were completely occupied in raiding Ireland and left England alone.

They did not reappear till Egbert of Wessex had conquered Mercia and had made himself overlord of all England. Then the Danes began to invade both England and the lands of the Franks. At that time their attacks were swift plundering raids, they came and went quickly though they did a great deal of damage. Their only attempt at a more serious attack, when

they united with the West Welsh of Cornwall to invade Wessex, was crushed by Egbert, who defeated them at Hengestesdun (838), near Plymouth



#### THE VIKING RAIDS AND SETTLEMENTS 9TH-11TH CENTURIES

The Holy Roman Empire occupied the eastern (German) part of the Empire of Charlemagne which was broken up soon after his death. Charlemagne ruled France, N Italy, and Germany, and attempted to restore the Western Roman Empire, destroyed by the barbarians

When Egbert defeated the Danes he was already an old man, and in the next year he died and was succeeded by his son Ethelwulf (839-858). The new king was a religious man,

and though he showed himself a capable soldier when he fought against the Danes, he does not seem to have been greatly interested in the defence of his country. Throughout his reign England was troubled by Viking raids. Canterbury and London were plundered and burnt, and though Ethelwulf defeated the invaders at Oakley (851), he soon afterwards left England altogether, and went on a pilgrimage to Rome. While he was away the country had to defend itself without him, and it was at this time that the Danes, not content with mere raiding, built themselves an armed camp on the island of Sheppey, and for the first time spent the winter in England. Later they made a raid inland as far as the Welsh border, so that it was no longer only the coast which was to suffer from their attacks.

During the reigns of Ethelwulf's four sons matters became much worse. The Danish raiders changed their tactics altogether and instead of appearing in small bands, united into a "Great army" led by Ivar and Hubba, sons of one of their kings, Ragnar Lodbrod. This army landed in East Anglia in 866, and instead of building a camp and staying near it, got horses for itself, left its ships, and struck off boldly to the north. For a very long time Northumbria had been a disorderly kingdom, torn by civil wars, and now it practically ceased to be a kingdom at all, for the Danes took York and killed its king. They destroyed and burnt the Northumbrian monasteries, which had been centres of learning and civilisation, for there was much plunder to be obtained from monasteries, and the heathen Vikings seem to have felt a particular hostility towards monks.

The Danes kept York and ravaged Northumbria. A year or two later, most of their army marched south through Mercia, burning the monasteries of the Fen-country, Peterborough, Ely, and Croyland. As they advanced, they ravaged East Anglia, and killed its king, St Edmund, by shooting him with arrows because he would not drink to their gods. They next invaded Wessex.

#### DEFEAT OF THE DANISH INVASION OF WESSEX

In Wessex they were to meet with a king who stands out as one of the remarkable men in history, Ethelwulf's youngest son, Alfred the Great. By the time of the Danish invasion Ethelwulf's two eldest sons (they died in 858 and 866) were dead.

throne of Wessex, and he and his brother Alfred, who was then about twenty-thrice, had to deal with the Vikings as best they could.

At first, like the Irish, the Franks, and the rest of England, the West Saxons found the invaders irresistible, and though they held out bravely they were defeated in eight battles. Then they won a victory at Ashdown (871) in Berkshire, but only to be defeated again at Marden in the same year. After the battle of Marden Ethelred died of his wounds. Left alone to meet the Danes as king of Wessex, Alfred fought them once more and was defeated at Wilton. He then bribed them to go away, so that he should have time to reorganise his kingdom and build a fleet. By now all England had been ravaged, and the Danes began to think about taking the land for themselves instead of merely wandering about it, fighting and plundering. So then great host began to break up. One of the leaders went north with his men to found the kingdom of York in southern Northumbria (Deira), the modern Yorkshire. Less important leaders with a smaller number of followers made settlements in eastern Mercia, and these men called themselves "jars," or ealds, instead of kings. The Mercian settlements resembled each other closely. In each of them a small band of Danes had settled and built for itself a fortified camp which grew into a town. From this centre it was easy for the Danes to seize and rule the country district around them. In spite of their warlike and roving habits the Vikings were always town-builders and traders, and their Mercian towns of Stamford, Lincoln, Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham became known as the "Five Danish boroughs."

Meanwhile, a section of the "Great Army," under a leader named Guthrum, had taken no part in these settlements, but had gone south to invade Wessex once more. At first Guthrum was successful, and it seemed that he would conquer the whole kingdom. If Wessex had been conquered there would have been no one left in England strong enough to resist the Danes, so the chance of the country remaining English instead of becoming Danish depended upon Alfred's military skill.

In 878 Wessex appeared to be already conquered. The Danish army had built itself a fortified camp at Chippenham, and Alfred had been forced to take refuge, with a few followers, in the Isle of Athelney, among the marshes of the Parrett. But,



*From the painting by Colin Gill in St Stephen's Hall Westminster*

THE DANISH INVADERS

King Alfred's long-ship, newly built for the defence of the realm, attacks vessels of the Danish invaders storm-beaten in Swanage Bay, 887

in the spring, the fortune of Wessex changed. The men of Devonshire rose against the Danes and defeated them, driving them out of the west country. Then Alfred, who had gathered an army together, inflicted a decisive defeat on them at Ethandun (878), and drove them into their camp at Chippenham, where they took refuge. Even after this the Vikings held out, for they were stubborn fighters and were so much hated by the English that they expected little mercy from them. But Alfred, when, after a forty days' seige, he had forced them to surrender, showed himself ready to make terms with them. By the Treaty of Chippenham or Wedmore (878) Guthrum and his followers agreed to be baptised and to leave Wessex. They were baptised at Wedmore where, now that the fighting was at an end, Alfred entertained them in a friendly fashion.



KING ALFRED'S JEWEL, DISCOVERED NEAR ATHELNEY IN 1693

The inscription means "Alfred had me made"

Guthrum and his Danes did not return to their heathen gods. They left Wessex and went to East Anglia, where Guthrum founded a Danish kingdom. This kingdom of East Anglia remained Christian in religion. Later, in 886, Alfred made another treaty with Guthrum, which is known as "Alfred's and Guthrum's Peace," and which defined the boundary between the Danish lands and Wessex. Alfred was then able to reorganise his kingdom, and to prepare for the future work of reconquering the Danish settlements.

#### REORGANISATION OF WESSEX BY KING ALFRED

Alfred was the first king in all Europe who had proved able to drive the Vikings out of his country. When he freed Wessex he put an end to the idea that the invaders could not be

overcome and inspired other rulers to resist them more boldly. But Wessex was the only English kingdom that had been rescued from the Danes. Danish settlements now occupied the east of the country. To the north was the kingdom of York, in eastern Mercia lay the Danish earldoms, in East Anglia was the Christian kingdom of Guthrum. Also the Viking raids were not yet at an end. Though the Danes for the next few years attacked the Franks, and left England alone, the Norsemen of



Will F Taylor

THE WHITE HORSE AT EDINGTON, THE FAMOUS SCENE OF ALFRED'S VICTORY OVER THE DANES IN 878

Ireland raided the west coast. These raids kept in close touch with the Danes of York, and even made settlements in Cumberland.

Instead of being overlord of England as Egbert had been, Alfred was at first king of Wessex only. Soon, however, the English part of Mercia and the Welsh kings took him for their overlord, for they felt the need of help against the Danes. After this the kings of Wessex kept their supremacy, and it was because

the Danish settlements broke up and disorganised Mercia and Northumbria that the other kingdoms were never again strong enough to become their rivals.

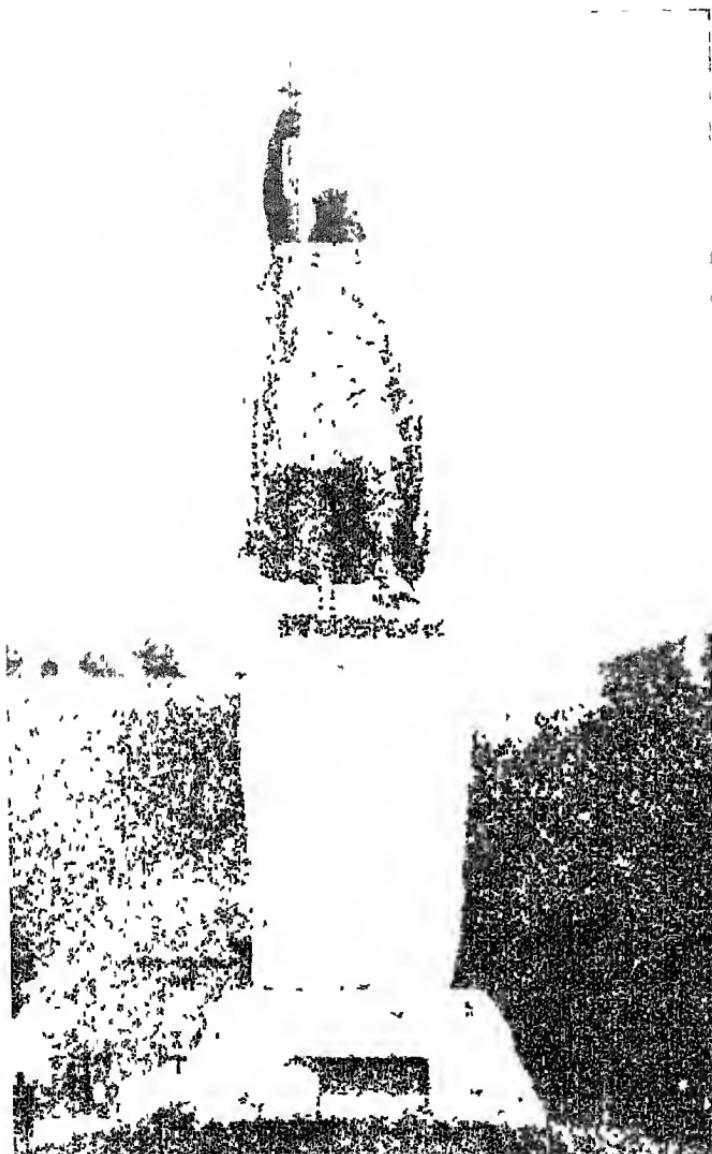
When Alfred had driven the Danes out of Wessex he set himself to reorganise and strengthen his country. In the first place he saw that it was necessary to be able to fight the Danes at sea, so he paid great attention to the improvement of his fleet, and had many new ships built. These were the open ships of the time, rowed by oars and not depending much on their one sail, but we are told that they were larger than usual and of an improved type. Because he realised the importance of ships for defence, Alfred has sometimes been called the founder of our navy, though the title is misleading in view of the fact that during certain stretches of our subsequent history we had no navy at all.

The Saxon kings had a band of personal followers whose occupation was fighting, but in wartime they needed additional soldiers. Therefore every able-bodied free man was expected to be ready to fight for his country, and formed part of a national army which was known as the "fyrd". But when the "fyrd" was called out few were left to cultivate the land, and if the war was a long one this was very serious. Therefore Alfred divided the "fyrd" into two parts, so that one could fight while the other attended to its ordinary business.

The men of the fyrd were poorly armed, and seldom wore defensive armour. The amount and kind of armour a man had depended on his social position, so Alfred tried to increase the number of "thegns," who were a kind of upper class, or gentry, so that he should have more well-armed fighters. An ordinary person who had sufficient land and the necessary armour and weapons could become a thegn, and so could a merchant who had made three voyages overseas at his own expense.

Remembering the time when the Danes had wandered about the country, plundering it at their will, Alfred built fortified boroughs, or towns, which could be defended. He granted land near these towns to thegns on condition that they should live in the town and help to defend it. All these measures helped to strengthen Wessex, and prepared the way for the conquest of the Danish kingdoms by Alfred's successors.

In spite of his warlike life and the amount of attention he had to devote to military matters, Alfred was interested in books,



ALFRED THE GREAT

learning and travel. During his childhood he had been twice to Rome, and he was always ready to listen to the tales of explorers. The Danish raids which had caused general disorder and had destroyed the monasteries, left England very ignorant, and the English Church ceased to be renowned for its learning. Alfred encouraged the clergy to study, and even established a school for the children of laymen, in which Latin as well as English was taught. He himself translated books for his subjects to read. When he died (900) he left Wessex not only safe from the Danes, but organised for future conquests, and far more civilised and educated than he had found it.

### RE-CONQUEST OF THE DANELAND

Not long after Alfred's death the Danish raids on England stopped and did not begin again for many years. The Vikings were busy settling in their new province of Normandy, which they had obtained from the Franks. This left Alfred's successors free to deal with the Danes of England. Alfred's son, Edward the Elder (900-924) conquered the Danish kingdom of East Anglia, founded by Guthrum. Then, helped by his sister, Ethelfleda, who was ruling in Saxon Mercia, he began to attack the Mercian settlements of the Danes. One after another the Five Boroughs and the earldoms of Danish Mercia were conquered. Edward fortified the Danish boroughs, and built new boroughs in eastern Mercia, as Alfred had done in Wessex, so that the country was well prepared for defence. In this way he became the acknowledged ruler of England south of the Humber, and the Danes of Northumbria, the Welsh, and even the Scots acknowledged him as their overlord, though he did not actually govern them. The Danish districts under his rule kept their own law and customs, and were known as the "Danelaw".

### WEST-SAXON KINGS OF THE TENTH CENTURY

About the kings who followed Edward we do not know a great deal. Most of them were strong rulers, acknowledged by all England. Athelstan (924-940), Edward's successor, was a king of such importance that he was known throughout Europe, and made marriage alliances with many European rulers. All

England, the Welsh, and the Scots acknowledged his overlordship. In 937 Constantine of Scotland, the Welsh of Strathclyde (*i.e.* the western Lowlands) and the Danes of York made an alliance against him. They were defeated in the Battle of Brunanburh. Edmund (940-946), who succeeded Athelstan, conquered the Norse settlers of Cumberland, and Edred (946-955) made the Danes of Yorkshire, who had always struggled for independence, submit to English rule. When Edgar (959-975) came to the throne England was peaceable and united, and his reign was a period of prosperity.

The most remarkable Englishman at this time was Dunstan, the friend and adviser of Edmund, Edred, and Edgar. Dunstan had been a courtier, but became a monk, was made Abbot of Glastonbury by Edmund and finally became Archbishop of Canterbury. He was talented and religious, and aroused envy because of his important position and his remarkable powers. He helped to rule England, and at the same time did much for the Church. During the disorder of the Danish invasions the monasteries had fallen into evil ways, but Dunstan reformed them and brought about a revival of learning in the south of England. Unfortunately by the time of his death the Viking raids were beginning again, and the country was fated to undergo another long period of misery and disorganisation.

### ETHELRED THE REDELESS

During the first period of the Danish invasions England had strong kings like Egbert and Alfred, and the invaders were first defeated and then forced to submit to English rule. But when the Viking raids began again the King of England was Edgar's son, Ethelred (978-1016) who was known as the "Redeless" or "lacking wisdom". He proved himself quite unable to deal with his enemies, and this time it was the Danes who were victorious and England that was forced to submit to a Danish ruler.

The new invaders included both Danes and Norsemen, and during the first years of Ethelred's reign they came on short plundering expeditions. Then, in 991, they defeated the English in the Battle of Maldon, and Ethelred paid them to leave the country. Naturally this did not keep them away long, and only a few years later a great army came to England and settled

down in the south, plundering and ravaging like the "Great Army" of Alfred's days

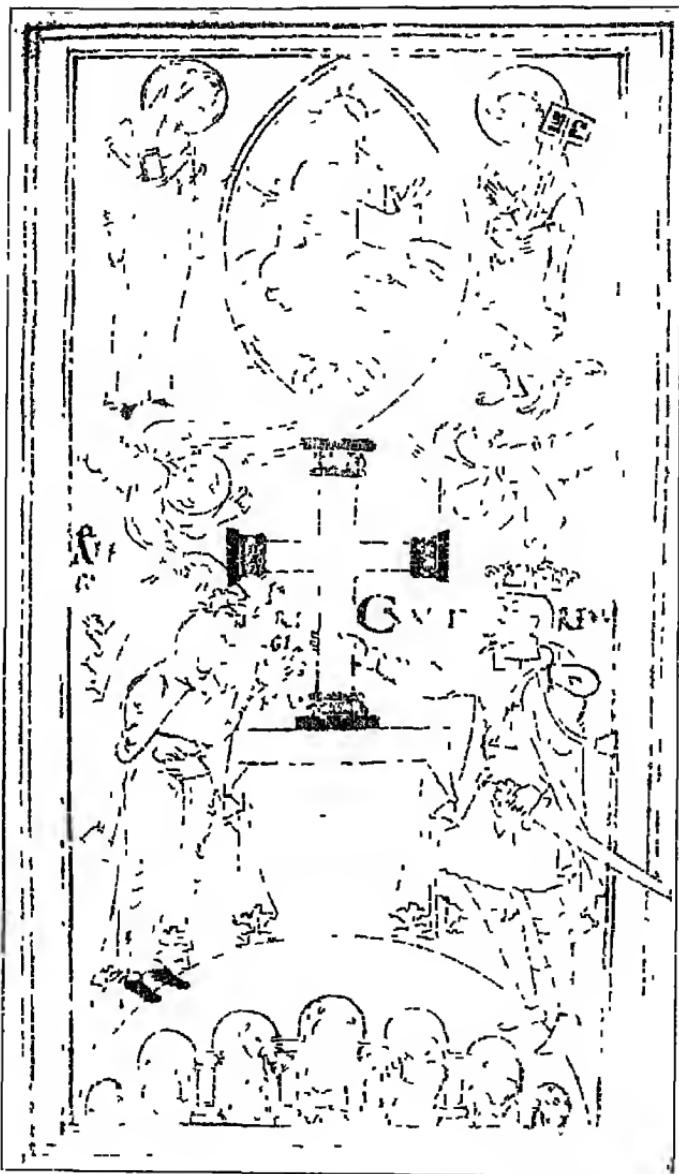
After this things grew worse and worse, and England was scarcely ever free from a Danish army in some part of the country. The most important leader of these armies was Sweyn, king of Denmark, who had conquered most of Norway, and now hoped to bring England also under his rule. Ethelred, in despair, made an alliance with the Normans, who were also suffering from Viking raids, though it was less than a hundred years since they had settled in France and ceased to be Vikings themselves. Ethelred married Emma of Normandy, but his new allies did little for him. In 1013 King Sweyn was chosen king by Northumbria and Mercia, where many Danes were settled, and finally by Wessex. Ethelred fled to Normandy and left the land to its new ruler.

### DANISH KINGS OF ENGLAND

Sweyn was not likely to be a good ruler, for he seems to have been a mere pirate king, and delighted in fighting, plunder, and cruelty. He died before he had ruled England a year and his followers acknowledged his son, Canute, then only nineteen years old, as king.

Canute did not meet with much opposition from Ethelred, who was still in Normandy, and died in 1016. But Ethelred's son, Edmund Ironside, who was about Canute's own age, put up a splendid struggle to free England from the Danes. He managed to reconquer the south, but in a battle at Assandun (1016) he was betrayed by an important English noble, Edric Streona, who deserted to Canute, and Edmund was defeated by the Danes. After this he arranged to divide England with Canute, and made peace. So great had been the hardships he endured during the war that he died soon afterwards, and left Canute to be ruler of all England.

Canute (1016-1035) proved to be a good king. On the throne he gave up his cruel Viking ways, and ruled wisely and justly. He was the ruler of a large northern empire, for he was king of Denmark as well as of England, and in 1028 he conquered Norway. He also ruled Iceland, the Hebrides, the Orkneys, the Isle of Man, and the Norse settlements of Ireland and Scotland. Of all his possessions he seems to have valued England the most.



*British Museum*

KING CANUTE AND HIS QUEEN AT NEWMINSTER  
They are shown placing the Great Gold Cross on the High Altar

highly, and he governed here through Englishmen and not through Danes. He sent his Danish army back to Denmark, because his wise policy made him able to rely upon the loyalty of his English subjects. The English benefited much by their alliance with the northern kingdoms, for they were able to take part in the valuable trade with the Baltic, and as they were more civilised than their northern neighbours they found a ready sale for their goods.

Canute granted Lothian (the eastern Lowlands) to Scotland. This had important results because Lothian had been settled by English tribes, and had formed part of Northumbria, so Scotland became mainly a Scottish-speaking, instead of a Gaelic-speaking, country. When Canute died his empire broke up. His son Sweyn ruled Norway and Harthacanute took Denmark. Harold (1035-1040), known from his speed in running as Harold Harefoot, became king of England, though his father had intended it for Hathacanute, who was the son of Emma of Normandy, Ethelred's widow, whom Canute had married. A very important Englishman, Godwine, whom Canute had made Earl of Wessex, supported Harthacanute, who obtained the throne on Harold's death. Harthacanute (1040-1042) reigned for less than two years, and with his death the Danish rule in England ended, and we come to the reign of another English king, Ethelred's son, Edward the Confessor.

	<i>England</i>	<i>Europe</i>
800		
	Mercia still supreme	
	802 Egbert King of Wessex (till 839) King of all England after 829	Norse raids on Ireland began
	825 Battle of <i>Ellendun</i> End of Mercian supremacy	
	829 Egbert conquered Mercia and received homage from Noi- thumbria	
	838 Battle of <i>Hengestesdun</i> Eg- bert defeated the Danes	
	839 Ethelwulf King of England (till 858)	
	851 Battle of <i>Oakley</i> Ethelwulf defeated the Danes Danes wintered in Sheppey	
850		
	"Great Army" ravaged England	
	871 Many battles between Danes and Wessex Alfred became king (till 900) Danes settled in Yorkshire and Mercia	
	878 Battle of <i>Ethandun</i> Alfred defeated Danes and freed Wessx. Danes settled in East Anglia	
900		
	Settlement of the Danelaw	
	900 Edward the Elder (till 924)	
	924 Athelstan (till 940)	
	937 Battle of <i>Brunanburgh</i>	
	940 Edmund (till 946)	
	946 Edred (till 955)	
	959 Edgar (till 975)	
	975 Ethelred the Redeless (till 1016)	
	991 Battle of <i>Maldon</i> Ethelred paid Danes to leave England	
950		
	Viking raids	
		Period of Dunstan's influence
1000		
		Period of Viking raids
		settlement
		862 Rurik a Swede, built city of Novgorod and established kingdom of <i>Russia</i>
		911 Vikings set- tled in <i>Noirmandy</i>

11th century	<i>England</i>	<i>Europe</i>
England ruled by Danish kings	Period of Norman settle- ments in S Italy	
	1013 Sweyn of Denmark chosen King of England	Leif, an Iceland Viking sailed to <i>North America</i> ( <i>Vyn- land</i> )
	1014-16 Canute and Edmund Iron- side struggled for English Crown	
	1016 Canute king (till 1038)	
	1028 Canute conquered Norway	
	1035 Harold Harefoot (till 1040)	
	1040 Harthacanute (till 1042)	
1050	1042 Edward the Confessor	

# CHAPTER V

## LIFE IN SAXON ENGLAND

### VILLAGE LIFE AND AGRICULTURE

When we compare Saxon England with Roman Britain we see what a terrible blow was dealt to civilisation by the barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire. The Roman towns were destroyed or abandoned and the Saxons lived in villages, which were separated from each other by broad stretches of waste land, and which had little to do with the world outside them. These



HARVESTING IN EARLY TIMES

*British Museum*

villages were seldom built on the Roman roads, because the country was so unsettled that it was not wise to live in a place which could be easily reached by enemies. Strangers were received with suspicion, for men who wandered about the country were frequently robbers.

Since the villagers lived in such isolation, they had to depend upon themselves for almost everything that they wanted (food, clothes, tools), and they united to obtain these things. Their land was not divided into separate farms, so their fields had a very different appearance from those of a modern village. There

were few hedges or fences, for the ploughed land of the whole village, where they grew their corn, was usually arranged in three large divisions or fields. These, because they were not divided by hedges, were known as "open fields," and there were three of them because it was not wise to sow the same crop on a piece of land every year. In each year one field was always sown with wheat, one with barley or oats, and one left fallow. Each field was divided by "balks" of unploughed land, into strips. Every villager, instead of a single piece of land, had so many of these strips, scattered about the fields, allotted to him. The village also had meadow land for hay, pasture for cattle, and a good deal of waste land, or common, around it, on which pigs were fed.

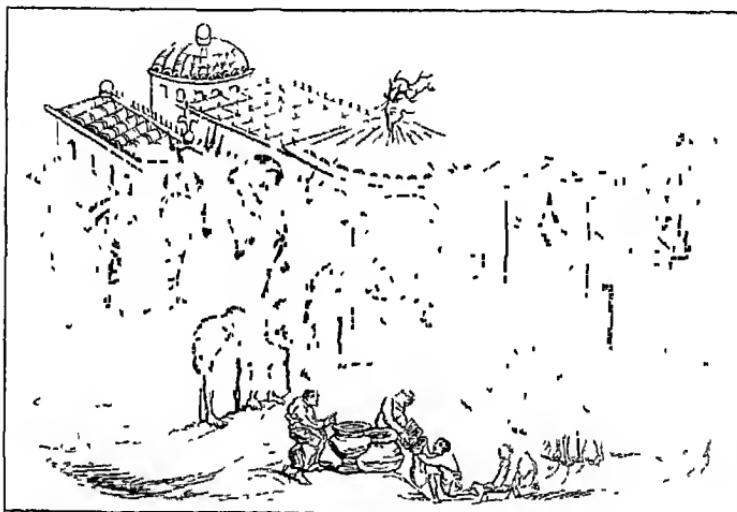
The villagers shared the work in the fields, and contributed oxen to the team of eight which ploughed the land. But there were certain villagers who did other work, and these, the smith, the bee-keeper, the swine-herd, etc., were paid by a share of the crops grown by the other villagers. Bee-keeping was important because honey was used instead of sugar. The women of the village spun and wove the wool of the sheep into cloth. In this way the village produced almost everything it needed, though when the country was peaceful and settled there was some trade. From the earliest times salt had to be bought, for, since there were no root crops, most of the cattle were killed and salted down for the winter.

Men of more than one class lived in the villages. There were free men with no claim to nobility, whom the Saxons called "churls," but there were also men who were not altogether free, though they were not slaves. These had various names, "geneat," "cottar," "gebu," according to the services they owed their lord. They could not leave the village without their lord's consent and were obliged to do a certain amount of work for him in the fields, but they had rights of their own and a house and land. There were also some slaves, called "thcows," though the Christian Church denounced slavery, and helped to put an end to it. When a village had a lord, he belonged to the ranks of the gentry, known as "thegns" or "earls." He had land in the village fields, and it was cultivated for him by the labourers who owed him service. His house was larger than those of the villagers, and was known as a "hall." This house

and the church were often the only buildings of size or importance that a village contained.

### COMMENDATION

There was in Saxon England no system of police to keep order. At first a man's own family was held responsible for him and fined for his misbehaviour. Later, people were organised in groups of ten, called "tithings." The members of these groups had to answer for each other's misdemeanours, and



RESIDENCE OF A SAXON NOBLEMAN

the group was punished if one of its members committed a crime. In addition to this, as time went on it became more and more common for each ordinary man to attach himself to some earl or thegn, who became his lord, gave him protection from other people, and was responsible for his good behaviour. Attaching oneself to a lord in this way was known as "commendation," and became almost universal when the Danish invasions caused men to feel the need of a powerful protector. Since it was part of the lord's business to keep his followers in order a man who had no lord, a "masterless man," came to be regarded as a suspicious character, probably a rogue.

## LOCAL COURTS, SHIRES, AND EARLDOMS

Since a lord was responsible for the men on his estate he had the right to hold a court to deal with their offences, but for free men there was an important system of local courts of justice. The villages belonged to groups known as "hundreds," and the freemen of the hundred held a "hundred court" in which offences of the district were judged. If the hundred did not give a man justice he could take his case to the shire court, where the bishop and the ealderman, who ruled the shire, presided. The sheriff, who represented the king, was also present. Methods of trial were quite different from those of our time. Sometimes the accused man had to undergo the ordeal of carrying a red-hot bar of iron for a certain distance, and the length of time the burn took to heal decided his guilt or innocence. This was regarded as the judgment of God upon the case. On other occasions the accused brought a certain number of people to swear that he was innocent. The oaths had to be of a fixed number and value, and the value of a man's oath depended on his social position. Punishment was usually by fine, and part of these fines went to the king and were an important source of revenue to him.

As the small kingdoms of the English settlement became united, the country was divided into shires, and each shire had an ealderman to govern it. Sometimes one man governed several shires, and after the Danish settlement the Saxon title of "ealderman" was gradually replaced by the Danish title of "earl" (jarl). As time went on the earls became more and more powerful and ruled their districts with little interference from the king. They were jealous of each other's power, so it was difficult to persuade them to combine against an invader. Because of their private quarrels, the Danes of Ethelred's day and, later, the Normans who fought against Harold, found England weakened and divided. When the earls became powerful it was difficult for the king to control them, and weak kings, like Ethelred and Edward the Confessor had little authority over their kingdoms.

## THE ROYAL REVENUE THE WITAN

The king's revenue came from many sources. He had rights over a great deal of land. He obtained money from the fines imposed in the law-courts and also from "Danegeld," a land-tax

which had been invented to raise money to pay the Danes to keep away from England, but which was continued for the king's own use. Kings often granted some of their rights over land to their followers, or to monasteries, by what was known as a "boc," or charter.

The king was aided by a body of advisers, called the "Witan," or "wise men." To these belonged the ealdormen, or earls, bishops, archbishops, and anyone else whom the king happened to summon. There was no representative of the



TYPICAL SAXON COSTUMES

The dress consisted of a short tunic, sometimes embroidered, a cloak, and shoes. People, and the king does not seem to have been obliged to accept the Witan's advice when it did not please him. No doubt however, an assembly of such powerful men had a great deal of influence. The consent of the Witan was usually asked when a new king had to be chosen.

### TOWNS AND TRADE

The English did not develop town life. When they settled in Britain the Roman towns were deserted or destroyed and the new settlers lived in villages. But gradually, as trade increased,

towns began to develop once more, though, to a modern observer, they would seem small and unimportant. They grew up in places where it was convenient for people to meet to trade with each other, *e.g.* where two roads crossed, at some point on a navigable stream, or near a bridge. Often they were built either on or near the site of a Roman town, and stones of the Roman ruins were used for building them. When the Danes came to England they built fortified camps, and these, as in the case of the "Five Boroughs" of Danish Mercia, often grew into towns. From the Danes the English learnt the use of fortified places, and Alfred and Edward the Elder built their "burghs," or walled towns, to defend the country against the Danes.

In Saxon England town and village life differed less from each other than they do in modern times. The towns were small, and the inhabitants were not cut off from country life as they are to-day. When Alfred established his boroughs as centres of defence he granted to the thegns who lived in them land nearby, so that part of the life of the townspeople was passed in cultivating their fields. Houses were usually built of wood, for the English knew nothing of building in stone until, at the beginning of the eighth century, Bede's friend, Benedict Biscop, who was abbot of Wearmouth and a great traveller, brought men from abroad to erect stone buildings and make window-glass. After this churches, monasteries, and halls were frequently built of stone, but ordinary houses were still wooden. Even the halls of great men were very simply constituted, and at first each room was built separately so that a hall and its attendant chambers were a group of buildings instead of one house. Then all began to be put under one roof, and during the tenth century we hear of halls of more than one storey high. Alfred did much to encourage building. He rebuilt London, for most of the Roman city was in ruins, and he encouraged his subjects to erect good houses for themselves.

The Danes were much fonder of town life than the English, and it is to them that we owe the beginning of the organisation of town government. The English had neglected trade, but all Vikings, however high their rank, were traders. When the Danes had settled in England, merchants came to be regarded with more respect, and the English began to trade with the Baltic, with Iceland, and with the Norse settlements in Ireland. The slave

trade was very important in Saxon England, and men and women were constantly bought and sold, though attempts were made to punish those who sold their fellow-countrymen abroad. The Church opposed and denounced the slave-trade, but it was continued in spite of opposition.

The life of the merchant was at this time a perilous and exciting one, so there was really nothing strange in the Viking custom of combining trading with piracy. A merchant who intended to sell his goods abroad had to be both a seaman and a good fighter, for the people among whom he went were not always friendly. Merchants had many adventures and went long



COSTUMES OF ANGLO-SAXON LADIES, SHOWING THE UNDER AND UPPER SLEEVED TUNIC, THE MANTLE, AND HOOD

distances to strange places. The Danes were quite as ready to fight as to trade, and their voyages were often voyages of exploration. The English were not so inclined to venture into the unknown, but Alfred was interested in distant lands, and he recorded the story of the Norseman, Othere, who sailed round the North Cape into the White Sea. The marvellous thing about the voyages made at this time is that they were made in open boats, and without compasses, by men who were ignorant of what they might encounter, and superstitious enough to believe that they might encounter anything. They command respect because of their tremendous courage and endurance.

### THE CHURCH AND MONASTERIES

As has been seen, the influence of the Church helped to make England into a single kingdom. When all English people shared the same Church government, and clergy from one kingdom passed freely and often into others, the different kingdoms lost much of their feelings of nationalism and hostility, and the way was paved for them to become united.

But the Church influenced the life of Saxon England in many other ways. Since almost all western Europe belonged to the Roman Church, the Church was much larger, more important, and better organised than any kingdom of the time, and the bishops and other ecclesiastics had a good deal of experience in ruling people and in administering affairs. Men employed by the king to help in the government of the country were as often churchmen as nobles; for instance, bishops belonged to the Witan and sat in the county courts. Since few people except churchmen could read or write they also had much to do with the less important work of government, and the kings often sent to the nearest monastery when they had written work to be done.

The life of ordinary people was more closely connected with the Church than it is to-day. Parish priests were often careless and ignorant, but they must have had much influence on the people of their villages, and the village church was used as a meeting place, where the villagers assembled when their work was done. Holidays were held on religious feast days, and the Church encouraged pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, in which people of every class took part. The Church paid little attention to distinctions of rank, and a poor man, who entered a monastery or became a priest, had a chance of rising to a great position if he had talents and good fortune.

The Church cost the people a good deal of money. Every household had to contribute a penny to the annual tribute to Rome, known as "Peter's Pence." There were also "tithes," which meant that a tenth of the crops grown and of the animals born had to go to the clergy. This was a very heavy tax. Also much land was held by monasteries, to which religious people frequently gave a part of their estates.

Saxon England had many monasteries. The idea of leaving the world to devote oneself to religion began in the third century with the Egyptian hermits, each of whom lived alone. Later,

communities known as monasteries were formed, in which many men devoted to the religious life lived together, while women led the same life in nunneries. About the year 500 St Benedict drew up a list of rules for the monastic life, and most of the Saxon monasteries followed the Benedictine rule, though they did not keep to it very strictly.

The monastery was governed by an abbot to whom the monks were expected to give unquestioning obedience. As the



THE FAMOUS SAXON CHURCH (BUILT BY ST ALDHelm BETWEEN 675-700),  
BRADFORD-ON-AVON

This is the only perfect building of pre-Norman times now remaining in England.

monasteries were rich and held much land, abbots were men of influence and importance. The monks were expected to lead a hard life with few comforts. They slept and ate together, and worked in the fields as well as prayed in their church, for Benedict believed in the excellence of manual labour. The writing of manuscripts employed some, and this was permitted as an alternative to field work. Discipline in monasteries often grew slack, and the monks led easier and more luxurious lives than their rule allowed.

The founding of monasteries was a favourite means by which Saxon kings and nobles showed their religious devotion, and many of them retired to a monastery to end their days. The monastic life must have been attractive to people of quiet tastes when the world outside was too turbulent and disorderly. But in offering all their gifts to monasteries people often neglected the rest of the Church, and parish priests were ignorant and ill-paid, so that religious work among the village people suffered.

### **LEARNING AND LITERATURE**

When we study the learning and literature of Saxon England we are forced once more to realise the importance of the work done by the Church. After the barbarian settlements in Europe each nation had its own language, but the Church still retained Latin, which had once been used all over the Empire, in its services, letters, and writings. This benefited civilisation in two ways first because men who could read and write Latin could understand and enjoy classical literature with its polished style and civilised ideas and secondly because Latin formed a kind of international language, in which learned men of all countries could write and talk with, and understand one another.

Again, without the Church and the monasteries learning might have died out for lack of books, because at this time all books had to be copied out by hand, and this work was done by monks. The Irish monks made changes in the Latin hands that they copied till they produced a very beautiful style of writing, and this was taught to the English by Irish missionaries. English and Irish books were often finely decorated, and contain some of the best artistic work of the period.

Until the coming of the Danes, who harried them, the monasteries of Northumbria were great centres of learning. The Saxon poet, Caedmon, who wrote a long poem on the Creation, was attached to Whitby Abbey. The monastery at Jarrow produced Bede, who was famous throughout Europe for his wisdom and his writings, though he did not travel, but lived quietly in his monastery. He wrote a great number of religious books, but is now chiefly remembered for his "Ecclesiastical History," which is one of the principal sources of our knowledge of Saxon England up to the early part of the eighth century, when Bede died. When Charles the Great, the Frankish emperor, wanted

to revive learning among his people he sent to northern England for a man to teach them, Alcuin of York

In the south Theodore of Tarsus and his friend, Abbot Hadrian, who came to England in the seventh century to organise Church government, established a school at Canterbury where Latin and Greek were taught. Then the struggle with the Danes nearly extinguished learning in England, and Alfred the Great had to work hard in order to revive it again. He, too, established a school, and brought men from abroad to teach his people. As a rule only churchmen could read and write, but the sons of nobles and even of ordinary people were admitted to Alfred's school. The King himself wrote and translated books for his people to read, the English tongue being employed for those who did not know Latin.

About the same time the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was begun, in which the events of each year were set down as they occurred, sometimes fully, and sometimes in a very brief fashion. The *Chronicle* was continued for some years after the Norman conquest, and though it is very different from a modern history it gives an interesting idea of the way in which events were regarded by the people among whom they happened. But the greater number of the English would still be unable to read either the *Chronicle* or Alfred's translations, so men who told stories and sang songs were much more important in every one's life than in our time. Singing and tale-telling were common amusements, and gave rise to many of the legends and poems that have come down to us. At first poetry was intended to be sung or recited, and it was only later that it was written down. In Saxon England rich and poor listened to wandering minstrels, great men had their own bards, and almost every one took a turn in the entertainment at a feast.

When the Danes once more began to invade England in the late tenth century, the country fell into disorder and learning declined. Norman influence began to be felt, and by this time the Normans, who had learnt much from the French, were far more civilised than the English. So even before the Conquest Saxon England had reached its zenith, and the Norman invasion probably brought with it changes of more value than the things it destroyed.

## CHAPTER VI

### EDWARD THE CONFESSOR AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST

#### EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

When Haithacanute died it was doubtful whether England would choose an Englishman or a Dane for her next king. The Danes of the north liked a ruler of their own blood, and the rest of the country was used to the idea of a Danish king. Probably only the bad government of Canute's sons stopped the English from giving the throne to Canute's nephew, Sweyn of Denmark, and made them think of sending for Ethelred's son, Edward, who was living in Normandy. The great earls, who ruled various parts of the country, had grown very powerful, and though the Witan was supposed to elect the king it was really with the earls that the decision rested. When Godwine of Wessex supported Edward's claim, he was recalled from Normandy, and the Danish king had to give up hope of the English crown.

Though Edward was English by birth he had lived so long in Normandy that he was more like a foreigner than an Englishman. He spoke Norman-French instead of English, he brought his Norman friends and servants with him, and he was too used to Norman manners and customs ever to learn to like English ones. If he had been a young, or adaptable man he might have changed, but he was already middle-aged and was a person of strong prejudices who could not easily be altered. He did not desire to be a king, for he was devoted to religion and not interested in the business of governing a country. His pure life and gifts to the Church made the people of his day regard him as a saint and call him the "Confessor," but in modern eyes he seems too narrow, prejudiced, and inconsiderate for saintliness.

#### GODWINE AND HIS FAMILY

During the first years of his reign Edward left England to be ruled by the great earls, Siward of Northumbria, Leofric of Mercia, and Godwine of Wessex. Of these Godwine was the

most important, though he was what we should now call a "self-made man." He was an Englishman of low birth, who had served Canute, had obtained his earldom of Wessex by his talents and ability, and had even married Canute's niece, Gytha. Though Edward owed the English throne to his support he never liked him because Godwine was suspected of having helped to bring about the death of Edward's younger brother, Alfred, who had been murdered during the reign of Harold Harefoot. But Godwine was so powerful that the King had to conceal his dislike, and even to marry the earl's daughter and to give his



Victoria and Albert Museum

## FUNERAL OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, FROM THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY

sons earldoms of their own. The greatest of these sons, Harold, became Earl of East Anglia and almost as important and powerful as his father. The one whom the King favoured most, Tostig, proved cruel and worthless, and was in the end to cause much trouble to his family. Edward's liking for him illustrates the King's inability to judge character and the obstinacy with which he clung to those whom he happened to like.

The power of Godwine and his family aroused the jealousy of the other earls, and especially that of Leofric and his sons, who ruled Mercia. This jealousy weakened England, and helped later to make her an easy prey to the Normans.

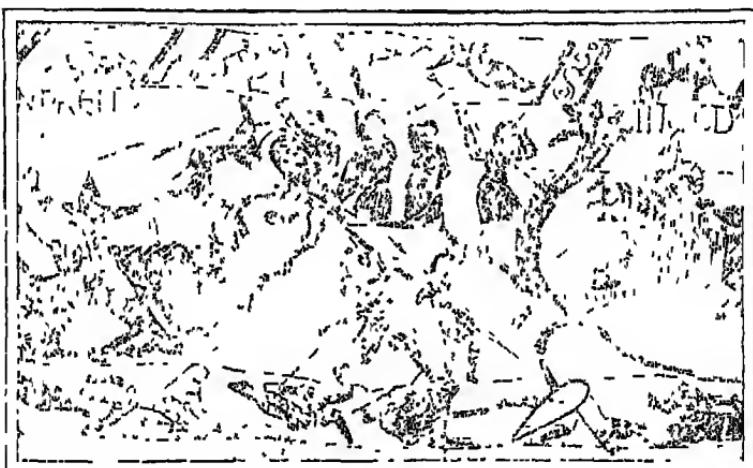
## NORMANS AND ENGLISH DURING EDWARD'S REIGN

The Normans, whom Edward so greatly favoured, were descendants of the sea-loving Northmen who had settled in France at the beginning of the tenth century. Their ruler had become the Duke of Normandy and a vassal of the French king. The Northmen were very adaptable and were inclined to imitate the way of life of the people among whom they settled, so, just as the men of the Danelaw gradually became English, the Normans had, during the hundred and fifty years since their settlement, become French in their dress, speech, and customs. But they still kept the adventurous spirit of their ancestors, and were inclined to wander and to seek their fortune in other countries.

They were a matter-of-fact, energetic people, with a respect for law, and a genius for organisation, and their country was progressive and well-governed. Most of their dukes had been able rulers, and Edward the Confessor's cousin, the young Duke William, was even more able than his ancestors had been. Under the Danish kings England had lost touch with the more civilised ideas and ways of living that had been growing up in Europe since the Danish ravages had come to an end, therefore she had much to learn from the Normans, though she was forced against her will to accept their lessons.

When Edward came to England he found that his subjects were much rougher in their manners than the Normans. Also England was less well-governed than Normandy, and the English clergy were worldly and ignorant. Edward had brought many Normans with him and he showed openly that he preferred them to the English, and gave them important positions. The English soon grew hostile to the King's Norman favourites, but though the opposition to them was headed by the great Earl Godwine, the most powerful man in the country, the first years of Edward's reign passed fairly peacefully. Then a small incident caused trouble to break out. In 1051 Count Eustace of Boulogne, who was Edward's brother-in-law, visited England, and quarrelled with the men of Dover, where he had to stay the night with his followers. Godwine, as Earl of Wessex, was ordered to punish Dover and refused, evidently thinking that he was strong enough to defy the King and to drive the foreigners out of the country.

Now the English showed for the first time how the quarrels of their own nobles placed them at the mercy of the Normans. The other English earls, Leofric of Mercia and Siward of Northumbria, hated the Norman, but they hated Godwine more and saw they had an opportunity to overthrow him. They, therefore, supported the King and his friends, and Godwine and his son Harold were forced to escape from England and were declared outlaws. To show his dislike for her family Edward even sent away his wife, Godwine's daughter. The earls were free of their great rival, but the Normans were now safe in England. It is



SAXON AND NORMAN SOLDIERS

(Bayeux Tapestry)

significant that William of Normandy himself chose this time to visit his cousin, and went back to Normandy declaring that Edward had promised him the succession to the English throne. From this time it seemed certain that the Normans would not remain content with an opportunity to make their fortunes in England, but would in the end try to take the whole country for themselves.

Godwine and Harold had fled, but they did not intend to remain in exile, and in 1052 they gathered a fleet together and sailed into the Thames. The people of the south received them gladly, and instead of uniting against them their enemies seemed

afraid to resist. The King gave them back their earldoms and they once more became the real rulers of England. Many of the Normans were driven out of the country or fled, but Godwine used his power peaceably and did not try to avenge himself on the English earls who had helped to drive him away. The great earl only lived for a year after his return, and on his death his son Harold succeeded to his earldom.

Harold now became the chief man in England, and when, on the death of Siward, the King gave the earldom of Northumbria to his brother, Tostig, Godwme's family held almost all the country except Mercia. It was said, too, that Edward had promised that, when he died, Harold should be made king. This made William of Normandy very interested in him, and when Harold, who was out on a pleasure cruise, was wrecked on the Norman coast, the Duke entertained him splendidly, but made it quite clear that he should keep his guest a prisoner unless he would swear to become the Duke's man and to support his claim to the English throne. There is a story that William tricked Harold by making him swear this oath on some very sacred reliques which were hidden so that he did not know till afterwards the seriousness of his vow. In any case Harold was in an unhappy position, for he seems to have been an honourable man, and he had been compelled by force to swear an oath that he did not intend to keep. When he returned to England new troubles followed. The Northumbrians had driven out Tostig for his cruelty and misgovernment, and though Edward would have restored the earl by force, Harold was too just to permit this. A year later (1066) Edward died and Harold was chosen by the Witan to succeed him.

## HAROLD AND THE BATTLES OF STAMFORD BRIDGE AND HASTINGS

When Harold had accepted the throne of England his position was far from being an enviable one. Both William of Normandy and Sweyn of Denmark claimed the English crown, and while Sweyn contented himself with threatening an invasion, William at once began to make preparations in earnest. At the same time Harold's brother, Tostig, who had been driven out of his earldom of Northumbria, was determined to avenge himself

and to win back his lands. Tostig went to ask the help of Harold Hardrada, the king of Norway, against England.

If Harold of England had been able to rely upon the support of his subjects he might have faced his enemies with more confidence, but the English earls were as jealous of him as they had been of his father Edwin, the son of Leofric, was now Earl of Mercia, and the Northumbrians had chosen his brother Morcar, to rule them in the place of Tostig, so it was only in the south of England that Harold could really place confidence.

The earlier months of the year 1066 passed without disaster, but in autumn Tostig and Harold Hardrada invaded Northumbria and defeated Edwin and Morkere near York. The sons of Leofric were now glad to obtain Harold's help, and he gathered the men of Wessex together and marched north to meet the invaders. Hardrada was a great fighter and a very famous man. He was one of the last of the pirate kings of the north, and had spent his life in fighting and wandering just as his countrymen had done when the Northmen were raiding all Europe. Harold of England was ready to fight him, but would have been glad to come to terms with Tostig. But Tostig refused to desert his ally, and the English under Harold defeated and killed both of them in the Battle of Stamford Bridge (1066).

Harold had now freed the north from danger, but he almost immediately received news of a worse danger in the south. William of Normandy had had some difficulty in persuading his subjects to help him to invade England. They thought it too great and dangerous an undertaking and many of them hung back. Then William suggested that those who chose to follow him should do so, and should receive lands and money in England in proportion to the number of men they brought to help in the conquest of the country. He made the same offer to foreign adventurers, and so gradually gathered a large army together. This army was eager for victory, because by the Duke's arrangement it hoped to make a great deal of profit out of its venture. The Pope blessed William's expedition and gave it his sanction, partly because Harold had perjured himself by breaking his oath, and partly because the Duke promised to reform the English Church when he had made himself king of England.

When the Normans landed in England, the English fleet, which had been watching for them, had gone into harbour to

be re-fitted, and King Harold was still in the north. William landed at Pevensey in Sussex and established himself and his army in a camp near Hastings. When Harold heard of his coming he gathered his men together and marched south to defend Wessex, though both he and his army must have been worn out by their northern march and battle with Hardrada. The chance that he was attacked by one enemy so soon after another is an example of the bad luck which Harold so often encountered.

Now, too, he suffered from the failure of the English to unite against their enemies. Though he had saved Morkere's earldom, Edwin and Morkere did not accompany him on his swift march south, but lingered behind as if they grudged any help that might



CHARGE OF THE NORMAN CAVALRY AT HASTINGS

give Harold a victory and make him secure on the English throne. So the King had to meet William with no more than the men of Wessex, who served under his own banner, and were already weary with fighting and marching, while the Norman soldiers were fresh. English and Normans met near Hastings, and a great battle was fought that decided the fate of the English nation.

The English fought on foot, and the centre and most important part of their army was composed of the soldiers of Harold's own household, who were armed with battle axes, carried great shields, and were drawn up round their King's flag of the "Fighting Man". The Normans had archers in the front of their army, then men armed with lances, and cavalry in the

real They attacked the English position, while the English fought on the defensive, driving their enemies back The battle was long and victory seemed uncertain, but in the end Harold was killed by an arrow in the eye and the Normans were victorious

### COMPLETION OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST

After the battle of Hastings the Normans held only the south-east of England and Edwin and Morkere were still marching south with their army If the English had acted with energy they might have saved their country, but in Harold they had lost their only able leader The principal men of the land assembled in London and chose as their king Edgar Atheling (= of the blood royal), the grandson of Ethelred, but when William arrived near the city they submitted to him and offered him the crown He was crowned on Christmas Day in the new abbey at Westminster, which Edward the Confessor had built When the crowd round the Abbey shouted out their acceptance of their king, the Normans thought that a riot was beginning, and killed many of them and burnt many houses

William now felt so sure of the safety of his conquest that he decided to return to Normandy, where his presence was needed Before he went he made grants of English land to his followers, as he had promised to do As far as possible, it was the lands of those who had died fighting at Hastings that he took rather than the lands of the living He desired to gain the good will of his new subjects, but the Normans had come to England in search of land and wealth, so it was inevitable that the English should suffer from their greed The Normans were inclined to despise the English, not only because they had conquered them, but because they were rough in manners and less progressive than their conquerors The English in their turn hated to see their land and the great offices of the state in the hands of the French-speaking foreigners whom they had learnt to dislike during the reign of Edward the Confessor It was a long time before the two races learnt to speak the same language and to feel themselves one nation

England was fairly quiet during William's absence There were a few local risings, but the King had taken Edwin, Morkere, and Waltheof, the son of that Siward who had ruled Northumbria

in the reign of the Confessor, to Normandy with him, and so there were no important leaders under whom the English could rebel. But in the still unconquered south-west, which was part of Wessex, and had been ruled by the house of Godwine, Harold's mother, Gytha, who was Canute's niece and had all the energy of the Danes, established herself in Exeter and defied the Normans. So on his return William had to besiege Exeter, which was a rich and important city, and which held out against him for eighteen days. In the end Exeter submitted and Gytha



WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

left the country. William treated the rebels mercifully, and marched on to subdue Cornwall. After this the south-west gave him no more trouble.

Edwin and Morkere showed themselves as unreliable in their dealings with William as they had been with Harold. They stirred up the Welsh and the northern English against the Normans, and when William marched north they made peace with him again. But the Danes of northern England were not ready to submit to Norman rule and they asked help from King Sweyn of Denmark, who still had hopes of the English crown,

and sent a fleet to aid them. The Danes sailed up the Humber and took York, but William drove them out without much difficulty. By this time William was thoroughly angry and was determined to make an end of all resistance to him. So he committed one of the most terrible deeds of his life. He took his army through the country between York and Durham, and laid everything waste. Houses and farms were burnt, and stores of food destroyed until it was impossible for people to live there (1068). After this fearful lesson the north was quiet, but William was not yet content with his work. Much against the will of his army, he set out to march across the Pennines from York to Chester, though it was winter, and the hilly country was very difficult to cross. When he had reached Chester he forced the men of the Welsh border to submit to him, and after this only one small piece of the country remained to be subdued.

The fens around Ely were at this time still undrained, so that the "Isle of Ely" really was an island of high ground rising above the surrounding marshes. On this island a small body of outlaws had gathered under a leader named Hereward, who had held land under the Abbey of Peterborough. These men still held out against the Normans, and they were joined by the Danes whom William had driven out of Yorkshire, and by Morkere who had again quarrelled with William and whose brother, Edwin, was now dead. Though the outlaws were few in number it was difficult to conquer them, because the marshes which surrounded their "isle of refuge" made it impossible for William's soldiers to reach them. So Ely held out till 1074, when William himself came to attack it. By this time the Danes had left England, after burning the abbey of Peterborough. When the English rebels saw that William was building a causeway along which his soldiers could march to reach them, they submitted, and English resistance to the Normans was at last completely ended. Hereward escaped, but later he was pardoned by William and taken into his service.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NORMAN KINGS AND FEUDALISM

#### FEUDALISM

To understand what happened during the reigns of the Norman kings it is necessary to know something about feudalism. "Feudalism" is the name given to the organisation of society that grew up in western Europe after the disorder that followed the fall of the Roman empire. It developed slowly and then gradually declined. By the end of the period of history known as the Middle Ages it had been replaced, except for a few interesting survivals, by new customs and ideas.

The feudal period is not easy for us to understand, because it was very different from our own. It is important to remember that feudalism was built up in a time of disorder, and that it was then a great step forward. Later, when the need for it was over, it began to seem old-fashioned and oppressive and restricted people's liberty. But liberty only becomes possible when there exists an orderly and civilised way of living such as feudalism helped to create.

One of the central ideas of feudalism was that, instead of being independent, each man should have a lord *i.e.* some one who was responsible for him. We have seen how this custom spread at the time of the Danish invasions, when men felt that they needed protection, and "commended" themselves and their goods to the keeping of some great man.

We have seen, too, that the village had a lord, to whom the villagers had to pay labour services and other dues for their cottages and land. The country estate of such a lord, with the dependent villagers and the land around it, was known as a "manor". Therefore the system by which the villagers had to work for their lord, and by which the whole estate was governed, was known as the "manorial system," and formed a very important aspect of feudalism.

The manorial system and the custom that each man must have a lord were well established in Saxon England before the

Normans came. But in Normandy feudalism had developed much more completely than this, and the Normans brought with them into England the feudal method of holding land.

### LAND TENURE AND MILITARY SERVICE

In Normandy, as in the rest of western Europe, all land belonged to the ruler of the country, who granted estates to his subjects. When a man received an estate, he had to promise to do certain services as a rent for it, and if he did not do the services he lost the right to the land. These services were of many kinds, but, since most rulers needed an army, land was usually granted in return for military service. That is, in return for his land, a man had to find a certain number of soldiers to fight for his lord. A man who held land from the ruler of a country did not, as a rule, keep all of it, but in his turn let land to other men in return for military or some other service. In all cases the man who let the land was the "lord" of the man who received it, who was called a "vassal." The vassal did "homage" to his lord, and swore "fealty" to him; that is, he swore to be his lord's man and to be loyal to him. So, in theory, there was a neatly organised system with the king at the top, since he owned all the land, next the king's vassals, who were known as "tenants-in-chief," and then the vassals of the tenants-in-chief, and their vassals, all of whom were known as "mesne-tenants." At the bottom of the list came the unfree labourers, whom the Normans called "villeins," and who could not leave the manor without their lord's consent.

The Normans brought their ideas of feudalism to England with them. After the Conquest, the lords of the English manors held their land from the king or from some other lord, to whom they owed services. Very often this led to complications, since a man might hold land of more than one lord, and so his services were divided. Moreover, the system provided the barons, as well as the king, with an army, and if a baron was disloyal his followers usually supported him. Great lords had much authority in their own estates, and there was always a fear that they might become independent of the royal authority. It was inevitable therefore that there should be many struggles between the king and his barons in which the king tried to increase his power and the barons to lessen it.

### FEUDAL COUNCILS AND THE "CURIA REGIS"

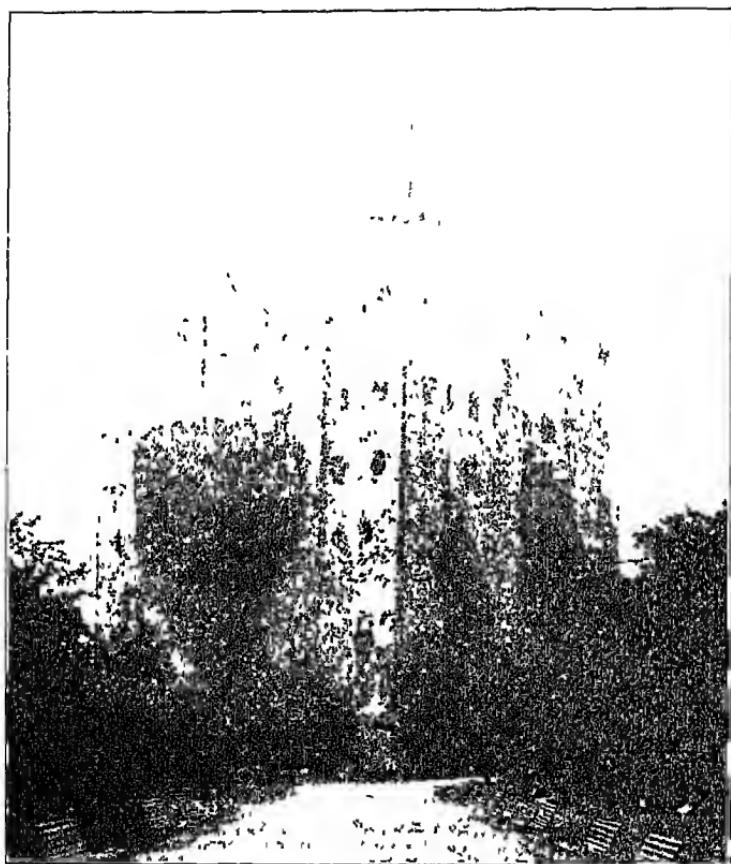
Since each lord depended on the support of his followers, he sometimes consulted them when anything of importance was to be decided. Therefore each great lord had his council of vassals, which he summoned at times for advice. In the same way the king had his council of tenants-in-chief, who held land from him, and this was known as "curia regis" (the king's court), or "magnum concilium" (great council). Even the smallest manor had its own court, to which the tenants came to decide matters of importance to the community.

These feudal councils had to decide all kinds of business. They gave advice when their lord asked for it, and they decided what services and payments were owing to him. If a vassal were accused of a fault, he could be judged in his lord's court by his fellow vassals, who were his "peers" or equals, though he might be judged in other courts. Similarly the people of a manor could be judged in the manorial court, and the unfree villeins could not, till the later Middle Ages, be judged anywhere else.

In the same way the "curia regis" attended to all kinds of government business. It advised the king, managed the collection of dues and taxes, and acted as a law-court, in which tenants-in-chief could be judged. Since a law-court was very profitable, because of the fines levied there, the king soon began to call cases out of the baron's courts into his own for judgment. He was able to do this as feudal overlord, but the barons greatly resented it. From this central "curia regis" of the Norman kings there gradually developed Parliament, the Privy Council, the Exchequer, which managed national finance, and the law-courts.

### WILLIAM I AND THE BARONS

In Saxon England the great earls were so powerful that the king had little authority and the English did not unite to drive out the Normans. The Norman conquest put an end to this state of affairs. When the great earldoms disappeared the power of the king was greatly increased, the country was better governed and more united. William I was a strong and capable ruler and had been accustomed, while Duke of Normandy, to control his barons. When he came to England he did not try



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#### ROCHESTER CASTLE

A fine specimen of Norman architecture

any new experiments, but acted as he had done in his own duchy, keeping order and giving his subjects good though strict government

Once he had completed the conquest of his new kingdom, he was not much troubled by foreign attacks. Exiled Saxons were inclined to take refuge in Scotland, and in 1070 the Scottish king Malcolm Canmore, who had married a Saxon princess, invaded the north, but William had wasted the country so effectively that the Scots soon turned back. William did not

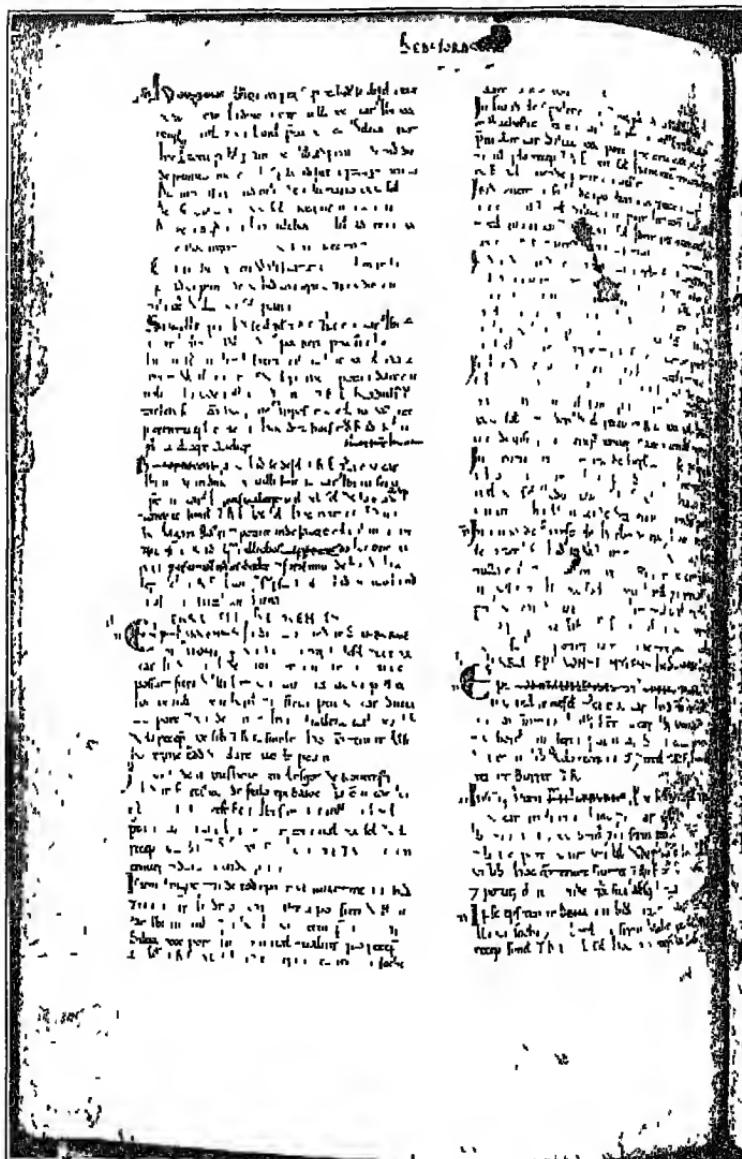
leave them unpunished. In 1072 he invaded Scotland and forced Malcolm to submit to him. After this there were threats of a Danish invasion, but these came to nothing.

In England, as in Normandy, William was a feudal ruler, but he was too strong and able to let his barons become independent. He wisely kept castles in his own hands. Moreover he depended on the English for support against his Normans, and not only used the feudal army of men supplied by his vassals, but also the old national "fyrd" of the Saxons. Some of his barons resented his strong government and in 1075, when William was away in Normandy, Roger Fitz-Osborn, the earl of Hereford, and Ralph Guader, the earl of Norfolk, decided to rebel. Their plan was to divide up England into three parts, one of which was to go to the English earl, Waltheof, the son of Siward, who had ruled Northumbria under Edward the Confessor. Because Ralph had married Roger's sister, in defiance of William's orders, the rising was known as the "Bridal of Norwich". It was put down by William's followers and by the English. Ralph fled, Roger was imprisoned, and the unfortunate Waltheof, though he had taken no part in the rebellion, was executed.

After this, William had little trouble with the barons, except his own half-brother, Odo, who was earl of Kent as well as bishop of Bayeux, and became so powerful that he raised his vassals to make war on his own account. To arrest a bishop was a serious matter, but William imprisoned Odo, saying that he was arresting the earl of Kent and not the bishop of Bayeux. As the King was on good terms with the Church no trouble followed. In 1086 he tried to weaken the authority of the barons by making all their tenants gather at Salisbury to swear allegiance to the king. He hoped that, then, if one of the earls rebelled, his followers might realise that they had a duty to the King as well as to their overlord.

#### THE DOMESDAY BOOK

In the same year, 1086, William ordered a survey of the whole country to be made. Fear of a Danish invasion had caused him to collect Danegeld, the tax which had been invented in Saxon times either to buy off the Danes or to provide money for fighting them. In early times it was difficult to obtain information about the people and their wealth and estates, and



PAGE FROM THE DOMESDAY BOOK.

Record Office

without this the collection of a tax was a very haphazard business. So William sent men round the country to gather juries of the inhabitants of each locality, and these juries had to give information upon oath about their own district. The information given was full and detailed. It included the name of the owner of an estate, the number, rank, and sometimes the names, of his tenants, the amount of cultivated land, of forest, of meadow, and of pasture, the number of ploughs, mills, and fishponds to be found there, and the value of the whole estate. This information made it easier for the king's officials to collect his taxes, but it annoyed his subjects greatly that so close an enquiry into their affairs should be made. The whole survey was written down and was known as "Domesday Book." In modern times the information it contains has been very valuable to historians.

### RELATIONS WITH THE FRENCH KING

During the last years of his reign William spent most of his time abroad. Though as King of England he was an independent ruler, as Duke of Normandy he was a vassal of the French king and had to pay homage to him. But the feudal vassals of France were powerful, and the King had little authority over them. They ruled their duchies almost as if they were independent kingdoms. The King of France was particularly jealous of the power of the Norman dukes, and did his best to stir up trouble for them. Norman barons who had quarrelled with William could always be sure of a refuge at the French court. Also, when William's son, Robert, who was impatient to get some power into his own hands, rebelled against his father, he had the support of France. In 1087 William had his last quarrel with the French king. He said that the city of Mantes was his by right, and went to besiege it. When the city had been taken, and he was riding through it, his horse stumbled, and the King was injured and died soon afterwards.

William had been a great and successful ruler, but he was not a man whom people found it easy to like. He was stern and often cruel, and men were afraid of him. He gave England peace, order, and strong government. He ruled by the same methods as he had used in his Norman duchy, and the changes that he introduced into England were not novelties, but based on Norman customs.

## WILLIAM II

When William I died, he left Normandy to his eldest son, Robert, and England to his second son, William. William II, known as "Rufus" because of his red hair and complexion, was a strong king though by no means a good one. He kept his barons in order by the fear he inspired and by the cruel way he punished those who opposed him. In this he was better than a weak ruler, who would have left the barons free to oppress the people. But his chief idea was to get money from his subjects to spend as he chose, and his reign was a time of extortion and oppression.

Robert of Normandy was not at all like his brother. He was a good-natured man, inclined to give way to everybody and he could not keep order in his duchy. Many of the English barons, who did not want a strong king, preferred him to William, and in 1088 they tried to put Robert on the throne. But the English people, who were oppressed by the barons, supported William, and so did the English Church. The revolt was sternly put down, and after this William was firmly established on his throne.

## FLAMBARD'S METHODS OF RAISING MONEY

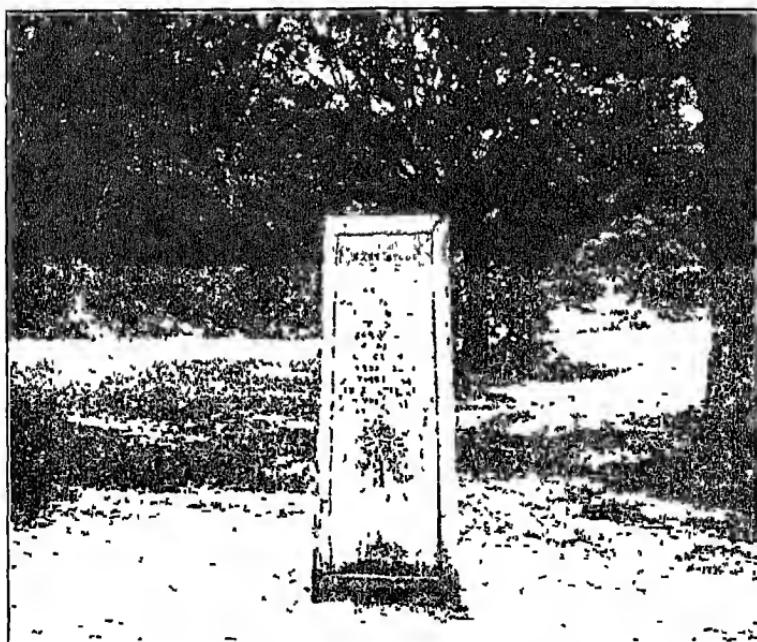
He was a grasping king, though he did not hoard the money he obtained, but spent it extravagantly. His chief minister, Ranulf Flambard, was clever at finding new ways by which money could be raised. Ranulf was a man of low birth, who had risen by the King's favour and became Bishop of Durham. He was talented and could make himself very agreeable to people, though the barons hated him. Besides their military service the barons owed the King certain other duties, and Ranulf exacted so much money for these that they became burdensome.

When one of his vassals died a feudal lord had the right to demand a "relief," which was a payment made by the heir to the estate, and Flambard would fix this very high. All feudal lords, too, had the guardianship of an heiress or heiress and their estates if the heirs were still minors, and not of an age to control their own affairs. Estates that fell into the hands of William or Flambard had so much money wrung out of them that the heir suffered when he was old enough to take his inheritance. Also the King had the right to arrange for the marriage of

an heiress who was a minor, so heiresses were sold to the highest bidder. And when a bishop died, William instead of appointing a new one, kept the lands of the see for his own profit.

### RELATIONS WITH NORMANDY AND WALES

If a weaker ruler had been equally extortionate the barons would have rebelled against him. But William's authority remained unchallenged and he was able to leave England and



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RUFUS STONE, LYNDHURST, NEW FOREST  
This monument was erected on the spot where William II was killed when hunting

make expeditions abroad to try to take Normandy from his brother, Robert. He was only partly successful, until in 1096 Robert decided to join the First Crusade, which was going to Palestine to free the Holy Land from the Saracens. To raise money for his expedition he pledged Normandy to William for a money payment, and the English King ruled Normandy till his death.

At home William took Carlisle from the Scots, and attempted to conquer Wales, but the heavily armed Norman horsemen were useless among the Welsh valleys and mountains. After this failure the King began the policy that laid the foundation for the conquest of Wales. He gave the barons, whose estates were on the Welsh border, permission to keep any land which they could conquer from the Welsh. These lords, known as the "Lords Marcher," because the border was called the Marches, built up large estates, and gradually overran the greater part of Welsh territory.

### THE DEATH OF WILLIAM II

William's death came when he was hunting. The Norman kings were great hunters and made very severe forest laws to protect all game from the ordinary people. William I had taken over a large district in Hampshire known as the "New Forest." In 1100, when William II was hunting there, he was killed by an arrow. He was hated by many of his subjects, and no one knows whether his death was the result of an accident, or whether he was deliberately assassinated.

He had given England strong government but had ruled somewhat harshly, and was regarded by his people as a tyrant. Therefore his successor found it easy to please people by promising that the evil customs of William's reign should come to an end.

### THE ACCESSION OF HENRY I

William I had left three sons, Robert of Normandy, William II of England, and Henry, whom people called "Beauclerk," or the "Scholar" because he had had more education than was usually given to laymen of his time. Henry was the cleverest of the three brothers, but his father had left him no land. When William died, Henry saw his opportunity to become king, and he at once hurried to Winchester and seized the royal treasury, because he knew that with money he could buy support.

The rightful heir to the English throne was Duke Robert of Normandy, Henry's eldest brother, but Robert was still at the Crusades, and Henry was already crowned before he could act. Henry knew that his only hope of keeping the throne was to persuade people to support him rather than Robert. To obtain support he at once issued a "Charter of Liberties" (1100), by

which he hoped to please the barons, the Church, and the English people, all of whom were weary of the stern rule of William II's reign. In this charter he made several rather vague promises of good government. To the barons he promised that the evil customs of William's reign should be given up, and in particular that he would not use his feudal rights of wardship and marriage unjustly, as William and his minister, Ranulf Flambard, had done. He promised that he would not take money unlawfully from the Church, nor keep Church lands for his own profit. Then, having dealt with the more important sections of the nation, he added a vague promise, to please the mass of the English people, that the laws of Edward the Confessor should be kept. This meant only that the rights and customs of the English nation should be respected.

Henry's charter helped to gain him the favour of the nation, but, like many other kings, he did not altogether keep the promises he had made. Yet these promises showed that it was understood that the people had rights that the King ought to respect, and they had an important influence on charters issued by later kings, especially upon "Magna Carta."

#### THE CURIA REGIS AND ADMINISTRATION

Henry I was an able ruler. Like his father and brother he not only kept order in the country, but made certain changes and reforms in the government. As has been said, the King ruled the country with the help of the Council of his tenants-in-chief, called "Magnum Concilium," or "Curia Regis." To this council belonged all the King's vassals, and when all these were assembled there was a quite large number of them. But as a rule most of the King's vassals were busy on their own lands and with their own affairs, and only came to the Curia Regis when there was important business to be discussed. The everyday work of government came to be done by a small number of officials and barons, who attended the "Curia Regis" regularly. So in the reign of Henry I we begin to distinguish two bodies in the government: a small "Curia Regis" which carried out the ordinary work of administration, and a large "Curia Regis," or Great Council, which met only on important occasions. But this change developed gradually, as a matter of convenience, so it is not possible to say that it was made at one particular date, or by one particular person.

The "Curia Regis" had to attend to all the business of government, and to act as a law court, to which Henry's vassals could bring cases to be decided. These cases were judged by the King and his barons, and the judgments were written down by a clerk. The "Curia Regis" had also to attend to the collection of money, and Henry put this business into the hands of Bishop Roger of Salisbury, who sat in a special room to receive and count the money that the sheriffs brought from various parts of the country. This was the beginning of the Court of Exchequer, which dealt with the financial side of government.

The Court of Exchequer had to hear and decide disputes about taxation, and this made it, for some purposes, a law court. Occasionally Henry would send one or more barons round the country to sit in the local shire courts, and there to attend to financial matters and to hear and judge cases brought before them. As a part of the work of restoring order he revived the local shire courts, which had been neglected, and arranged for them to meet regularly. He put the shire court under the control of the sheriff, who was a royal official and represented the King in the county. The sheriff had more and more to do with the government of the shire, which had been mainly in the hands of local barons, who now controlled most of the hundred courts and had their own courts on their manors. In these ways Henry carried further the work of William I. in making the King and the central government powerful.

### ROBERT AND NORMANDY

England alone would not have given Henry much trouble, but he had to deal also with Normandy and his brother Robert. When Robert returned from the Crusade (1101), he made terms with Henry, and went to rule his own duchy of Normandy, which had returned to him on the death of William II. Henry then punished those barons who had supported Robert, but he began to see that an English king could never be safe when he had to deal with so many powerful families who held land both in England and Normandy, and so could never be wholly English in their interests. So he gave the land of Robert's supporters to men upon whom he could rely. In this way he began to build up a new and loyal nobility of his own, to the annoyance of the Norman barons, whom he further disquieted by marrying

Matilda of Scotland, a descendant of the English royal house. This marriage pleased the English people and showed that Henry wanted to make a united nation and not to depend on Norman support alone.

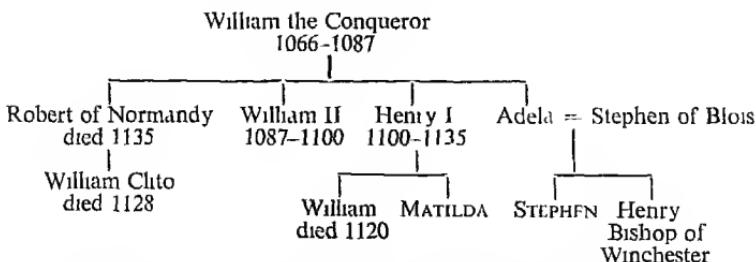
Robert continued his attempts to obtain the English crown so Henry decided to conquer Normandy for himself. He invaded Normandy, and won a victory over his brother at Tinchebœuf (1106). This made Normandy his own, and he imprisoned Robert in England during the rest of his life.

After this the French king supported Robert's son, William Clito, against Henry, and so caused trouble in Normandy till William died of a wound (1128). This prevented Henry's rule from being as peaceful in Normandy as in England, but during his later years his chief problem was that of the succession.

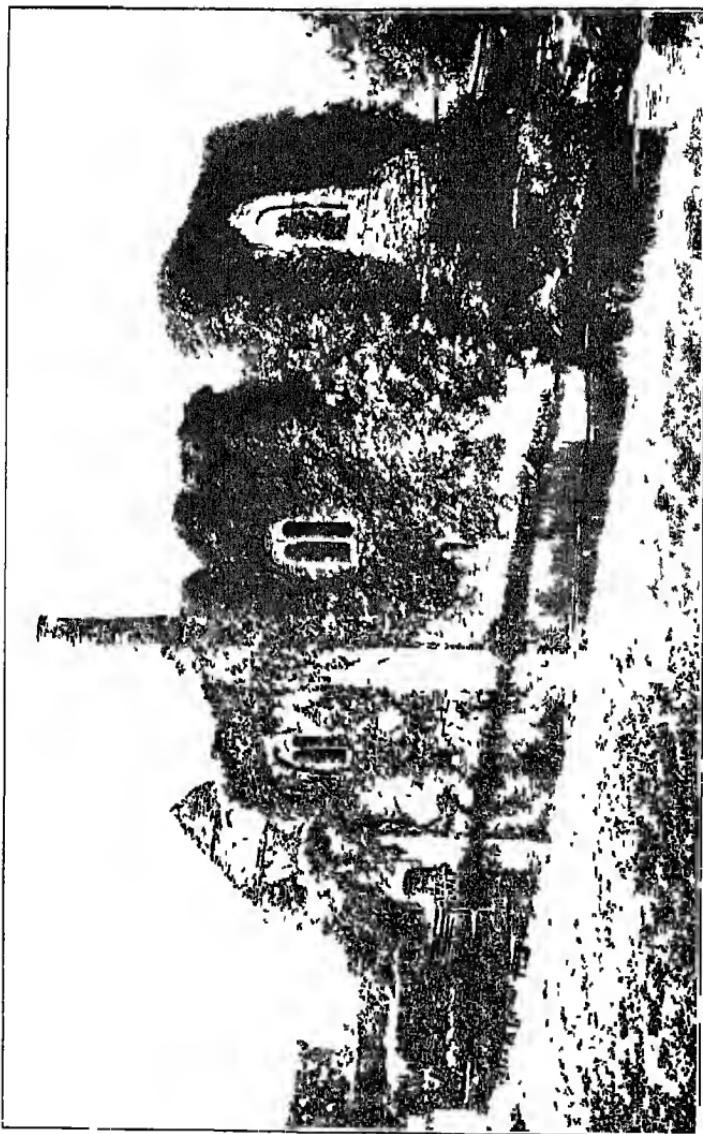
### MATILDA AND STEPHEN

In 1120 his son William was drowned by the sinking of the "White Ship," in which he was returning to England from Normandy. Henry made his barons swear to accept his daughter, Matilda, as their queen, but he knew that the rule of a woman was little suited to such disorderly times, and that other people might try to gain the throne. Matilda was the wife of Geoffrey of Anjou, and she was sure of Angevin support, but as the Normans hated the Angevins, it seemed likely that trouble would follow Henry's death.

When the King died in 1135, his nephew, Stephen, although he had sworn to be loyal to Matilda, immediately claimed the throne for himself. Stephen was the son of Adela, daughter of William the Conqueror, who had married Stephen of Blois.



Stephen and his brother Henry, had been brought up at Henry I's court and their uncle had treated them very well.



THE NORMAN HOUSE, CHRISTCHURCH

The picture shows the ruins of an old Norman Manor House

Stephen had been made Count of Boulogne and Mortain, and Henry had entered the Church and had become Bishop of Winchester. At court Stephen was a general favourite, for he was brave, chivalrous, and generous. Matilda, on the other hand, was too proud, tactless, and masterful to be popular.

Stephen did not have much difficulty in placing himself upon the throne, but Matilda had no intention of leaving him in peace. There followed long years of civil war and disorder such as had never been seen under the strong Norman rulers. Till now the barons had been kept in order by strong kings, but now they could support either Stephen or Matilda as they chose, so each was obliged to bargain with them, offering them whatever they asked in the hope of buying their loyalty. This left each baron free to rule his lands as he pleased, to quarrel with other barons, and to ill-treat and rob the common people. The barons built strong castles of their own, and kept bands of armed followers, who plundered the countryside. The whole country fell into a terrible state, and Stephen's reign shows the evils of feudalism when the barons were free to do as they pleased.

Early in Stephen's reign the Scots invaded the north of England, but Archbishop Thurstan of York gathered the barons of the north together to oppose them. He gave the English army a great standard, upon which was hung the banners of St Peter of York, St Wilfrid of Ripon, and St John of Beverley, and because of this the battle that followed is known as the "Battle of the Standard" (1138). This battle was fought near Northallerton, and the Scots were so completely defeated that the north was free from their attacks.

### CIVIL WAR AND ANARCHY

At first almost all the English barons and even Matilda's half-brother, Robert, earl of Gloucester, supported Stephen, but in 1138 Robert went over to Matilda's party and the civil war began. For a while Stephen had the best of it, but he quarrelled with Bishop Roger of Salisbury, Henry I's minister, and imprisoned him and his nephew, the Bishop of Lincoln. This lost him the support of the Church, for not even his brother, Bishop Henry of Winchester, would forgive the imprisonment of bishops. Then he captured Matilda, but sent her with an escort to join her followers at Bristol. The barons, instead of admiring

such chivalrous conduct, saw from this how blind Stephen was to his own interests, and how, in spite of his energy and courage, he would never make a strong ruler

For a while Stephen's fortunes suffered a decline, for people began to think that it was wiser to support Matilda and Robert of Gloucester, and Ralph, earl of Chester, who had seized Lincoln Castle went over to their side. In the Battle of Lincoln (1141) Stephen was defeated and taken prisoner, and it seemed for a time that Matilda, the "Lady of the English," would succeed in putting down all resistance to her.

Matilda now had an excellent chance of success. The Church, since Stephen had been foolish enough to quarrel with the bishops, supported her, as did the Londoners, who wanted nothing so much as an end to the general disorder and fighting, which were upsetting their trade. The barons were willing to accept whichever ruler would make most concessions to them, so Matilda had no strong opposition to encounter. But she proved to be so hard and tactless a ruler that people soon began to feel that they preferred Stephen, and when Stephen's supporters captured Robert of Gloucester they at once offered to exchange him for the King, who was still in prison at Bristol.

With Stephen once more at liberty the war dragged on as before, without either party becoming victorious. Matilda was besieged in Oxford Castle and almost captured, but she escaped over the snow dressed in white, and joined her friends elsewhere. Abroad her party was more successful than in England for her husband, Geoffrey of Anjou, conquered Normandy (1142-4).

Finally, a new personality appeared on the scene. In 1150 Geoffrey of Anjou handed over the government of Normandy to his own and Matilda's son, Henry. Henry of Anjou, though not yet twenty, soon became a very important person. In the next year he succeeded to his father's province of Anjou, and in 1152 married Eleanor of Aquitaine, and so acquired the greater part of south-eastern France. He then came to England to take part in the war against Stephen. But Stephen had become weary of fighting, and as his son had died and he had no heir he made terms with Henry instead of continuing the war. By the Treaty of Wallingford (1153) it was agreed that Stephen was to keep the English throne until his death, but that Henry was to succeed him. In this way the long civil war ended, and England obtained a ruler strong enough to restore order.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NORMAN KINGS AND THE CHURCH

#### THE CLUNIAC REFORMATION

Like everything else in Europe the Church had fallen into disorder during the period of chaos that followed the Viking raids. People had little time to spare for religion or learning, and both were neglected. Kings granted bishoprics to clerks (*i.e.* clerics) who had been useful to them in the work of government, and who were worldly officials rather than men of religious life. Often, too, bishoprics and other positions in the Church were sold to men who intended to profit by the income from them, and this was known as "simony." In the same way the monasteries became less and less strict, until men retired to a monastery in order to lead an easy life, and the rules that St. Benedict had laid down were ignored and neglected.

But at the beginning of the tenth century Duke William the Pious of Aquitaine had founded a monastery at Cluny in Burgundy which was to become a great centre of religious influence. The monks of Cluny attracted attention because of the strict way in which they followed St. Benedict's rules. Other monasteries desired to imitate them, and these, instead of remaining independent, put themselves under the control of the Abbot of Cluny, who soon became the head of monastic houses in different countries, which were spoken of all together as the "Congregation of Cluny."

This reform in the lives of monasteries had a great deal of influence. Those who hoped for a reformation in the rest of the Church turned to the teaching of the monks of Cluny for their inspiration, and so the religious revival which took place in the eleventh century is known as the "Cluniac reformation." The Cluniacs desired that the Church should become much less worldly. They taught that the clergy should not marry but should devote themselves entirely to religion. Bishops were to be chosen by the Church because of their religious life, and not by the King because of their usefulness to him. Above all, they

claimed that the Pope was head of the Church, that all authority came from him, and that the rest of the Church must be absolutely under his government

Many rulers admired the Cluniac teaching, and supported the reform of the Church in their own countries on Cluniac lines. But when the Popes began to act upon the new teaching as to their authority, to interfere everywhere, and to claim that they were superior to all kings, trouble followed. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries there were a number of strong and energetic Popes who greatly increased the power of the Papacy, but were constantly engaged in quarrels with kings or emperor.

### THE CLAIMS OF THE PAPACY

The Popes of this period held that their power, being from God, was more important than that of any temporal ruler. They also said that laymen had no right to interfere with the Church, which was a religious body and should be under religious control. But the rulers of the time would not admit this, and there was trouble with regard to the appointment of bishops. A bishop was a feudal baron, as well as a churchman, and kings could not afford to leave the choice of men who were to have so much power in their country to the Pope, or any other foreign authority.

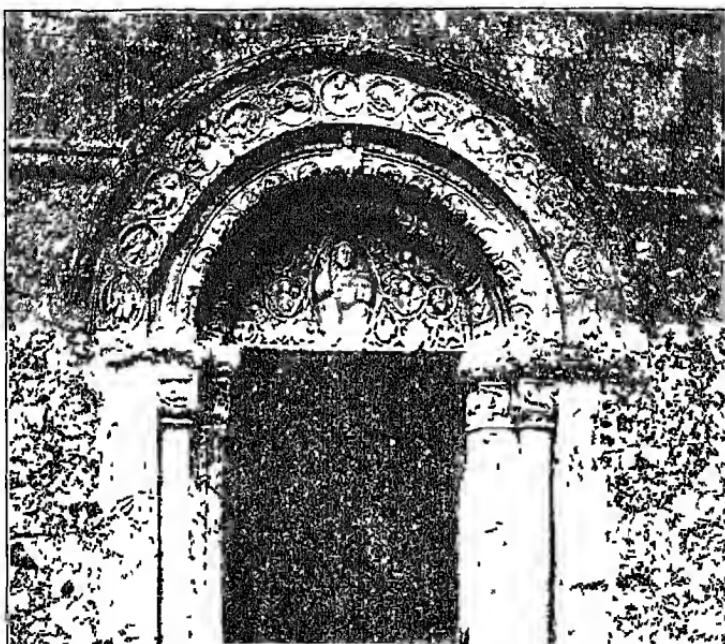
On this question of the appointment of bishops the Popes had a long struggle with the Emperors, known as the "Investiture Contest". A similar struggle took place in England. The Emperors were the rulers of that Holy Roman Empire established in 800 by the Frankish ruler, Charles the Great. In imitation of the Roman Empire of classical times, the Emperors claimed to be, by right, lords of the world, though in reality their authority only extended over Germany and northern Italy, while France and England were quite independent.

The Pope also claimed the power to make and depose kings. By excommunicating a ruler, or freeing his vassals from their oaths of allegiance they would often enforce their will, and they did not confine their attention to religious matters, but interfered in politics. In Saxon and Danish times England had had little to do with the Pope, but after the Norman Conquest the English Church became more and more closely connected with Rome. The Normans introduced the Cluniac reforms into England, and

the Norman kings had many struggles with the Church in the attempt either to exert their own authority or to exclude that of the Pope

### WILLIAM I. AND LANFRANC

During the troubled years of the eleventh century, when Dane and Saxon were struggling for the country, the English Church, like everything else in England fell into disorder



BAYEUXSTONE CHURCH DOOR, KENT

A good example of Norman architecture

Churchmen became worldly and often led evil lives, monks did not keep the rules of their monasteries, learning was forgotten, and not only ordinary priests, but bishops too, were often ignorant men. The Cluniac reformation that was taking place in the rest of Europe did not affect England, which, under her Danish kings, was more closely connected with the Scandinavian north than with the more civilised regions of the south, and did not come much into contact with European thought and progress.

When the Normans conquered England, they at once began to set the Church in order. Before Duke William set out for England the Pope had blessed his expedition and had given him support in return for a promise that the English Church should be reformed.

In dealing with the Church, William had the help of a very clever churchman, Lanfranc of Pavia. Lanfranc was an Italian, who had become a monk in the Abbey of Bec, a Cluniac monastery in Normandy. He was an able lawyer and a strong supporter of the Cluniac views about church reform. He had great talents as a diplomat and statesman, and, at a time when it was quite usual for King and Pope to quarrel, he was able to understand and measure the claims of both, and to arrange a working compromise between them. He was also a cheerful and agreeable person, whom people found it easy to like, and thus he did not antagonise those whom he had to help govern.

When William made him Archbishop of Canterbury he at once began to introduce changes into the English Church. The monasteries were reformed, and the monks forced to abandon their easy lives and to give more obedience to the rules of their order. At the same time the Normans were founding new monasteries, which belonged to the Congregation of Cluny, building churches, and giving land to the Church.

William and Lanfranc tried to revive learning and to give England better clergy and bishops. It was natural that they should give the best places in the Church to their Norman countrymen. Moreover, the Norman clerics were so much more learned than the English ones, and so much more closely in touch with the Continental movement for Church reform that their appointment was really a good thing for the English Church. Nevertheless English people were inclined to resent it, just as they resented the giving of land, and of great positions in the State to their Norman conquerors. In accordance with Cluniac teaching the clergy were forbidden to marry, though, since most of the Saxon clergy were already married, those who had wives were permitted to keep them.

Cluniac teaching emphasised the difference between a priest and a layman, and said that no layman was worthy to sit in judgment on a priest. So church courts were established in which clergymen were to be tried, and it was understood that

the ordinary law courts had no right to try them. This was a great step forward for the authority of the Church, and was later to lead to much trouble.

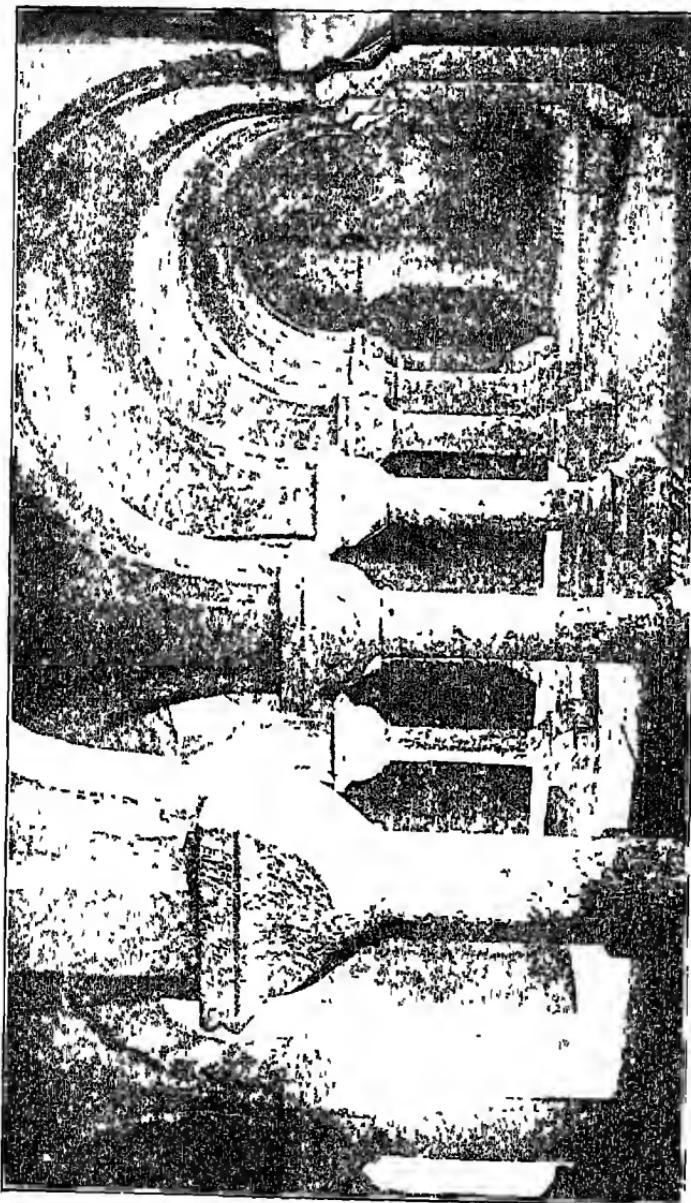
### RELATIONS WITH THE PAPACY

Though William I was really interested in Church reform, and was on good terms with the Papacy, he had no intention of permitting the Pope to interfere in the control of the English Church. When the Pope, whose idea of his own authority had been greatly enlarged by the Cluniac teaching, put forward any new claims, William did not hesitate to oppose them, and in this he was supported by Lanfranc.

Pope Gregory VII even claimed that William should do homage to him for his kingdom of England, since it had been conquered with Papal permission, and since it paid an annual tribute, called "Peter's Pence" to the Pope. William refused to admit that he held his kingdom from any one, and the Pope was forced to give way. Nor did he permit the Pope to have any voice in choosing bishops, for the bishops were great feudal lords as well as churchmen, and the King felt that he must be sure that they were men who would be loyal to him, and upon whom he could rely.

William would not even permit much communication between the Pope and the English Church. Papal letters could only come into England by royal consent, and English bishops were not allowed to visit Rome without royal permission. The King interfered in the making of "canons," or Church laws, for though he revived the custom of holding councils of the English Church, all the rules made by these councils had to receive his approval.

In these ways William kept the English Church under royal authority. Although it was reformed, the Pope was given little control over it, and the ideas of the Cluniac reformers, of the Pope's right to control all Churches and to be supreme over all rulers, did not greatly affect England at this time. But, during the reigns of succeeding kings the position altered. English churchmen began to accept the Continental ideas about the Pope's authority, and one struggle after another took place, until Papal authority over the Church in England had been greatly increased.



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WORCESTER CATHEDRAL CRYPT

A characteristic example of early Norman work

## WILLIAM II AND ST ANSELM

So long as William I was on the throne the Church in England had been willing to be under royal control, for it received just treatment. But William II, unlike his father, and unlike almost all other men of his day, was not only irreligious, but ready to boast of the fact, and in this way shocked both clergy and people. Having little respect for the Church, he regarded it, just as he regarded the rest of the nation, as a source from which he could extract money. He was ready to sell bishoprics to the highest bidder or, in many cases, not to appoint a bishop at all, so that he could keep the revenue and land of the see. This caused resentment and scandal, but William was no more afraid of the Church than of the barons, and he was so harsh a ruler that no one dared openly to resist him.

While he lived Archbishop Lanfranc had been able to check the King's evil ways, but when Lanfranc died William did not appoint another archbishop, keeping the income of the see of Canterbury for himself. Then, about five years later, the King fell ill, and thinking that he was going to die, promised to amend his ways and to choose a new archbishop. The man chosen for the office was another Italian, Anselm of Aosta.

St. Anselm was not in the least like Lanfranc. He was neither a lawyer nor a statesman, but a theologian who paid attention only to religious matters. He had lived for thirty-three years in the Norman monastery at Bec, of which he had been abbot, and knew very little of secular affairs. He did not wish to become an archbishop, but men so respected his saintly life that they thought that even William must be influenced by it, and he was forced to accept the office against his own will. When William recovered, however, he soon forgot his repentance and returned to his old ways once more. He continued to extort money from the Church and he quarrelled with Anselm, so that the Archbishop left the country and went into exile.

While Anselm was out of England he visited Rome, where the contest between Pope and Emperor over the appointment and investiture of bishops had already lasted many years. There he learnt ideas that were to cause much trouble in England. Anselm had always believed that the Pope should have complete authority over the Church, and he now learnt to believe that kings had no right to choose bishops, to invest them with their

office, or to receive homage from them. With these ideas in his mind he returned to England at the beginning of the reign of Henry I.

### THE INVESTITURE CONTEST

Anselm was too devout and honest a man not to act in accordance with his beliefs, so when he returned to England he



*British Museum*  
SEAL OF ANSELM

refused to do homage to the King for his archbishopric of Canterbury. He explained carefully to Henry the reason for his behaviour—that the Pope had forbidden bishops either to receive their offices from king's or to do homage to them. This reform was intended partly to stop the practice of obtaining bishoprics in return for payments of money (simony), but it really showed the new ideas of the Church with regard to its own power and authority. Churchmen argued that religion was the most important thing in life, and that the Church, which represented

God on earth was superior to any kingdom or empire, which was merely the work of man. Thus churchmen were superior to laymen, who were not worthy to invest them with offices or to receive homage from them.

Unfortunately for Anselm Henry I was not inclined to consider religion more important than the good government of his country. He was mainly interested in bishops, not as churchmen, but as feudal vassals who held large estates over which he felt he must maintain his overlordship. He could not allow men who had so much land and power to be chosen and controlled entirely by a foreign Pope. This attitude was, from Henry's point of view, quite reasonable, but Anselm looked at the question entirely from a religious standpoint and seemed unable to understand and sympathise with the King's difficulties as Lanfranc could have done. So the two quarrelled about the question of the "investiture" of bishops just as the Pope and the Emperor had already been quarrelling for more than twenty years.

At the beginning of this quarrel some of the English bishops supported Anselm and some the King. But Henry, made angry, by what he considered to be the unreasonableness of the Church, behaved unwisely. He was not content with keeping Anselm out of England but, like his brother William, seized the lands of the archbishopric of Canterbury and kept their revenues for himself. He also taxed the Church very heavily, so the bishops gradually ceased to support him. In the end the fact that he wanted to be free to carry out his plans for taking Normandy from his brother Robert made him ready to begin a long series of negotiations with Anselm, which led to a settlement of the quarrel.

This settlement was known as the Compromise of Bec, and was agreed to in 1107. By it both Church and King obtained something. The King was able to influence the election of bishops and abbots, for they were to be elected in the royal chapel by the chapter of the cathedral or the monks of the abbey concerned. He was also to receive homage for the lands which the bishop or abbot held. But the Church alone was to have the right to invest the new prelate with the ring and staff, the signs of his office, because it was not considered fitting that ecclesiastical offices should be bestowed by the State. This compromise was to prove very important because it was a model for the

one by which Pope and Emperor ended the Investiture contest in Europe in 1122.

By the Compromise it seemed that the King had gained most of what he wanted. Yet, Anselm's struggle had increased the strength of papal influence in England. Henry treated the Pope as William I had done and would not admit his letters, or his representatives, who were known as "legates," into England without royal permission. But the Church in England was learning to dislike the idea of royal control. More and more monasteries which were exempt from all authority save the Pope's, were being founded in England, and these helped to spread the new ideas about papal authority. The same ideas were taught at Paris and Oxford, where men were already gathering to study. New bishops, even though the King chose them, were inclined to support the Pope's claim to interfere in the English Church. Moreover, the exactions of both William II and Henry I had taught churchmen to think of the King as someone against whom they must defend their property and right. So by the end of Henry I's reign the Pope's influence in England had greatly increased.

#### STEPHEN AND THE CHURCH'S INCREASING POWER

During Stephen's reign the Church, like the barons, became more and more independent, until the King had little control over it. Stephen was a generous and good-natured king who was not stern enough to force his subjects to obey him. He was also obliged always to remember that people whom he treated harshly, or refused the things they wanted, would probably desert his party and go over to that of his rival Matilda. He therefore tried to buy the support of the Church, in a way that caused trouble to his successors, by issuing a charter by which he gave up nearly all his feudal rights over churchmen. The Church began to choose its own bishops, and these acted as they pleased, without reference to the King's will. Stephen also asked the Pope's permission to set aside his oath to be faithful to Matilda, and to take the English crown for himself, and later Popes were able to bring this forward as evidence that England really belonged to the Papacy, and that English kings were their vassals.

Henry of Blois, Stephen's brother, was Bishop of Winchester, and "legate," or representative, of the Pope in England. His relationship to the King did not prevent him from supporting papal authority, and he not only ruled the Church as he pleased, but干涉ed in politics. When Stephen imprisoned Bishop Roger of Salisbury and Bishop Alexander of Lincoln, Henry abandoned the King's cause altogether, and upheld that of Matilda. This almost caused Stephen's defeat.

The way in which Stephen's quarrel with the Church affected his fortunes shows how important and powerful the Church was at this time. A very great part of the work of government was done by it, for churchmen were not only those devoted to a religious life, like priests and monks, but almost every one who could read was a "clerk," or cleric, and belonged to the Church. Many of these clerks were religious neither in their lives nor in their work, but were employed by the Government, just as in modern times civil servants are employed. When the King's clerks served him faithfully, he would reward them by giving them rich church livings or even bishoprics, and in this way they were provided with an income and position that cost the King nothing. In view of this practice of making bishops of men whose work was political rather than religious, the Church attempted to prevent lay rulers from granting ecclesiastical offices. But in spite of all opposition the kings continued to make bishops of their faithful servants, and throughout the Middle Ages we meet many great churchmen who were statesmen and politicians first and bishops afterwards.

The bishops with whom Stephen quarrelled were men of this kind, for Bishop Roger of Salisbury had been an important minister of Henry I, who had employed him to collect the revenues and to manage the finances of the kingdom. He had controlled and helped to organise that branch of the Curia Regis which dealt with money and was known as the Exchequer. Stephen accused him and his family of fortifying their castles and preparing to resist his authority, and if they had been barons his treatment of them might have passed unchecked. But the Church was now assured of its own power and would allow no one, not even the King, to imprison a bishop. It proved able to punish the King, showing how much stronger it had become since the days when William I imprisoned his brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux.

	<i>England</i>	<i>Europe</i>
1040	1040 <i>Hautacanute King</i> (till 1042)	
1050	1042 <i>Edward the Confessor</i> (till 1066)	
1060	1051 Godwin and Harold in exile	
	1052 Return of Godwin and Harold	
	1066 Harold King of England Battles of Stamford Bridge and Hastings <i>William I</i> (till 1087)	
11th century	1068 Harrying of the North	
1070	1074 End of Ely rebellion	
	1075 "Bridal of Norwich"	1075 Investiture contest began
1080	1086 Domesday Book Oath of Salisbury	Contest
1090	1087 <i>William II</i> (till 1100)	Investiture
1100	1096 Normandy pledged to William II	
	1100 <i>Henry I</i> (till 1135) Charter of Liberties	
	1106 Battle of Tinchebrai Henry conquered Normandy	
	1107 Compromise of Bec Investiture struggle ended	1st Crusade
1110		
1120		
1130	1135 <i>Stephen</i> (till 1154)	
	1138 Battle of the Standard (Scots defeated)	Period of the Crusades
1140	1141 Battle of Lincoln	
	1142-4 Normandy conquered by Geoffrey of Anjou	
1150	1153 Treaty of Wallingford	1122 Concordat of Worms ended Investiture contest

## CHAPTER IX

### HENRY II

#### RESTORATION OF ORDER

When the civil war of Stephen's reign ended everything was in disorder. The barons had built castles of their own, and seized royal castles, and in these they kept bodies of armed men who pillaged and terrified the country around them. They paid little attention to the King, but ruled their estates as they pleased. Henry I.'s reforms had disappeared, and the Church had become so independent that the King had little authority over it. This was the state of affairs when Henry II came to the throne.

Henry of Anjou was a young energetic man. He was fair from handsome, for he was short and thickset, with a red face, red hair, and arms too long in proportion to his body. He was always in a hurry, and his court moved from place to place so erratically that no one knew just where it would be found at any particular minute, and the life of his court officials was an uncomfortable and harassing one. But Henry was a man who got things done quickly and efficiently, and proved to be one of the most able kings that England has ever had. Before he had been a year on the throne, he had restored order in his new kingdom a terrible task. He took back the land granted by Stephen to the barons to buy their support, he destroyed the new castles they had built, and put royal estates in the charge of his own servants.

Having reduced the barons to order, Henry set himself to restore the good government that Henry I had given to England. He was ready to imitate his grandfather's reforms, but he also introduced useful changes, especially in making it easier for people to obtain justice.

#### LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

So long as the barons could have people tried in their courts, they had far too much power, so Henry provided other means of trial. Like Henry I, he sent judges round the country to try cases in the local courts. In Henry I's reign these had been

officials engaged mostly in financial and administrative work in the counties (itinerant justices) Henry II also sent men especially to try legal cases (justices of assize), and the county was divided into circuits, which they visited regularly. This practice survived to become the "assizes" of modern times.

Henry's next task was to make sure that cases of wrongdoing were brought before his justices. He ordered that, when the justices visited a shire court, they were to be met by twelve men from each hundred in the county, and four from each township. These men were to discover those accused of crimes in their district and to present them for trial. This was the origin of the use of the jury in law courts. Juries were first summoned to give information, just as William I had used local juries to gather the facts written down in Domesday Book. The prisoners continued to be tried by ordeal till after 1216. Then the Church forbade the use of the ordeal, so another jury was used to decide whether the accused was guilty or not.

After this, important crimes were tried before the King's justices, and only small ones were left to the baronial courts. But Henry was not content with this, and arranged that, in civil cases (that is, in disputes about land, property, etc.), either of the parties involved could obtain an order, known as a "writ," that the case should be tried in the King's court. These cases had, as a rule, been settled by "trial by battle," which meant a fight between the claimants. Now they could be decided by a jury, and, as the rival claimants usually preferred this, trial by battle gradually disappeared.

One difficulty in the way of trial in the King's court was that the court followed the King around the country, people did not always know where to find it. So the King left some judges at Westminster to hear cases. This court at Westminster was known as the "Court of Common Pleas," while the judges who moved about the country with the King were known as the "Court of King's Bench." Like the Exchequer Court, which at first dealt only with disputes about revenue, these courts were all branches of the "Curia Regis." This had at first dealt with all kinds of work, but was now splitting into sections, each of which had its own tasks. The enactments by which Henry made his new legal arrangements were the Assize of Clarendon (1166) and the Assize of Northampton (1176).

The barons did not like these changes, which weakened their power, limited the work of their courts, and gave the King the money levied in fines. Henry did other things to weaken them. Many sheriffs were great barons and oppressed the people, so an Inquest of Sheriffs (1170) was held to enquire into their behaviour. After this sheriffs were appointed from people of less importance, who would obey the King. Henry was also determined not to depend too much upon the feudal levies of the barons for his army. He frequently used a custom of Henry I's reign by which, at the King's pleasure, a baron could be made to pay a sum of money instead of military service. With this money, which was known as "scutage" (shield money) the King could hire soldiers of his own. He also reorganised the national army (fyrd) of the English for home defence, laying down in the Assize of Arms (1181) exactly what armour and weapons each man must possess.

#### THOMAS À BECKET AND TRIAL OF THE CLERGY

During the Norman period a struggle had taken place between the old idea, that the King should control the Church, under the overlordship of the Pope, and the new Cluniac teaching that the Pope should control the Church without royal interference. As a result of this struggle, in spite of the success gained by Henry I in his quarrel with Anselm, the Pope's influence in England had increased. In Stephen's reign the King lost almost all control of the Church. He had abandoned his feudal rights over bishops and had ceased to choose them, and he had acknowledged the Pope's claim to the overlordship of England by asking his permission to take the English crown.

Henry II was not inclined to allow this state of things to continue. Over the bishops, as over the barons, he was soon able to assert his authority, and his right to select them. But a new question arose which was to be less easily decided.

William I had granted the clergy the right to be tried in their own courts. These courts could not condemn people to death, so, if a cleric committed a murder, they could punish him only by "unfrocking" him—that is by taking away his position as a churchman and making him into a layman again. Since almost every one who could read belonged to the Church, and could claim to be a "clerk" or "cleric," and to be tried in the Church courts many people escaped the penalty for serious

crimes Henry wanted to put an end to this, and to make the Church courts, after "unfrocking" clerks accused of serious crimes, hand them over to the ordinary courts for punishment

Unfortunately for Henry, he chose quite the wrong man to help him to deal with the Church. Thomas Becket was the son of a rich Londoner and had been educated in the household of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury. Theobald was remarkable for his culture and learning. From him Becket had learnt the doctrines of the Cluniac reformation, which placed



HENRY II IN DISPUTE WITH BECKET

churchmen far above laymen, because of the sanctity of their office. But though Becket was a clerk, he never appeared to take much interest in religious matters. He entered the King's service, like many other clerics, and became Chancellor and Henry's most intimate friend. His household was more magnificent than the King's, and the King's son, Henry, was put into it for his training in knightly manners. Altogether, Becket's character and life were so worldly that they quite obscured his devotion to the ideals of the Church, and Henry thought that he could be relied upon to support him.

So when Theobald died, Henry made Becket Archbishop of Canterbury. Thomas was very unwilling to accept the office and warned the King that the choice would not prove a good one. Once he had accepted the archbishopric, he began to behave in accordance with his ideas of what an archbishop ought to be. He gave up his worldly life and lived very strictly, and instead of supporting the King against the Church he became the Church's champion against royal interference.

Henry was angry at what he considered to be his friend's betrayal of his cause, and a quarrel broke out almost at once about the question of the trial of the clergy. The King demanded that clerks accused of serious crimes should be tried by the Church courts, unfrocked if guilty, and then handed to the ordinary courts for punishment. Becket would not agree to this, because he said that it was not right that a man should be twice punished for one offence. But the English bishops did not support Becket, and the Archbishop finally consented to accept the old English customs in this and other Church matters. These customs were investigated, written down, and presented to the bishops in a Council at Clarendon, so they are known as the "Constitutions of Clarendon" (1164). These constitutions upheld the King's contention that condemned clerics ought to be handed over to the King's court for punishment, and they also laid down other rules with regard to the Church. The clergy were to hold their land as barons and to fulfil their feudal obligations, the bishops were not to leave the kingdom, nor to carry disputes to Rome for settlement, without the King's consent, which was also necessary before any of his barons could be excommunicated. If these constitutions were accepted the Church would be once more under the King's control, as it had been in the days of William the Conqueror.

To Becket, who had been educated in the Cluniac ideas of the importance of the Church and of churchmen this was unthinkable. Though he had agreed to accept English customs, he had not left Clarendon long before he withdrew his consent to the Constitutions and refused to hand over one of his clergy to the King's court for trial. At another council at Northampton he was tried for refusing to obey the King's court, and the bishops joined with the barons in condemning him.

It seemed that Henry had triumphed over his archbishop, but the King did not let the matter rest. He was by now so

angry that he wished to destroy Becket altogether. He accused him of misusing money committed to his charge when he was



THE DEATH OF BECKET

*British Museum*

Chancellor, and seized his land and revenues. Becket was forced to leave England, but this treatment, naturally aroused sympathy for him.

Abroad Becket had an unhappy life, for even the Pope thought that he would have done well to come to terms with the King. In the end, in 1170, he was allowed to return to England, and there seemed some hope of reconciliation. But now it was the Archbishop who acted vindictively. During Becket's absence Henry II's young son, Henry, had been crowned by the Archbishop of York. Becket considered this an encroachment on his own privileges, and excommunicated the archbishop and all the prelates who had taken part in the coronation.

The result was that the whole country ended in a terrible tragedy. Henry had an ungovernable temper, and when news reached him in Normandy of what the Archbishop had done, he fell into a rage, and cried out for some of his followers to rid him of Becket. Four knights, Reginald Fitzurse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard le Breton, took him at his word, and crossing to England, murdered Becket in Canterbury Cathedral.

The crime shocked all Europe, and public opinion swung over completely to Becket's side. The Archbishop was declared a saint, and it was said that miracles were worked at his tomb. The King was really penitent, but could not undo the result of his rash words. He did penance and was finally forgiven by the Pope, but on the question of the Church courts he could no longer hope to obtain what he wanted. Till the Reformation clerks continued to be able to claim trial in their own courts ("benefit of clergy") for all serious crimes, though not for small offences. The King had also to permit cases to be taken to Rome to be decided, though he asserted his control over the election of bishops, and his feudal rights over them.

#### IRELAND AND SCOTLAND

After the death of Becket Henry was anxious to show his penitence by doing what he could to please the Pope. For this reason he set himself to bring the Irish Church under Papal control.

The Celtic people of Ireland were still divided up into tribes or clans, just as the Britons had been before the English settlement. Also the country was divided into kingdoms, and the king of each of these had some authority over the tribes which

lived on his territory. Over all Ireland was a Head-King, to whom all the other kings owed allegiance. This Head-King had little real authority, the country was disorderly, and the different tribes and kingdoms often fought with each other.

The Irish had been taught Christianity by St. Patrick, a Briton, and their beliefs and customs were those of the old Celtic British Church. After England joined the Roman Church at the Synod of Whitby (664) the Church in Ireland still remained Celtic and isolated. It was a Church famed for its learning, its missionary work and its monasteries, and did good service to Europe during the dark ages of the barbarian settlements. Then the Northmen descended upon Ireland, and sacked and burnt its monasteries, and destroyed its civilisation. When the Irish had overcome them, Ireland, instead of being a centre of learning, was a very backward country indeed, and had fallen far behind the rest of Europe.

After the Normans conquered England the fame of their exploits as fighting men spread to Ireland. Therefore, when, during Henry II's reign, Dermot, king of Leinster, was driven out of his kingdom, he came to England for Norman help. Henry permitted him to seek help from the barons of the Welsh border who were used to continual fighting with the Welsh. The greatest of these Lords Marcher, who went to Ireland, was Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, nicknamed "Strongbow." The Normans conquered Leinster, and restored Dermot, who soon died, leaving his country in the hands of his new allies. Henry now began to feel that he could not allow his barons to become independent in Ireland, so he decided to visit that country himself.

Since the Irish Church still remained Celtic in its customs, instead of Roman, the Popes were anxious that it should be brought under their control. At the beginning of his reign, Henry had been commissioned by Pope Hadrian IV to conquer Ireland, but had been too busy with the affairs of his own province to do so. After the death of Becket he thought that he would at once please the Pope by reforming the Irish Church, and assert his authority over his own barons in Ireland. In 1171 he visited Ireland and the Irish chiefs came to pay him homage and to acknowledge him as their lord. In the next year he held a synod of the Irish Church at Cashel (1172) and reformed

were made there which brought the Irish Church into line with that of Rome

This Norman conquest of Ireland did not bring the whole country under English rule. After it the English King called himself "Lord of Ireland," but he had little authority there, except over the Anglo-Norman settlers, who were few in number compared with the native Irish. The Irish tribes remained practically independent and continued to live as they had done before.

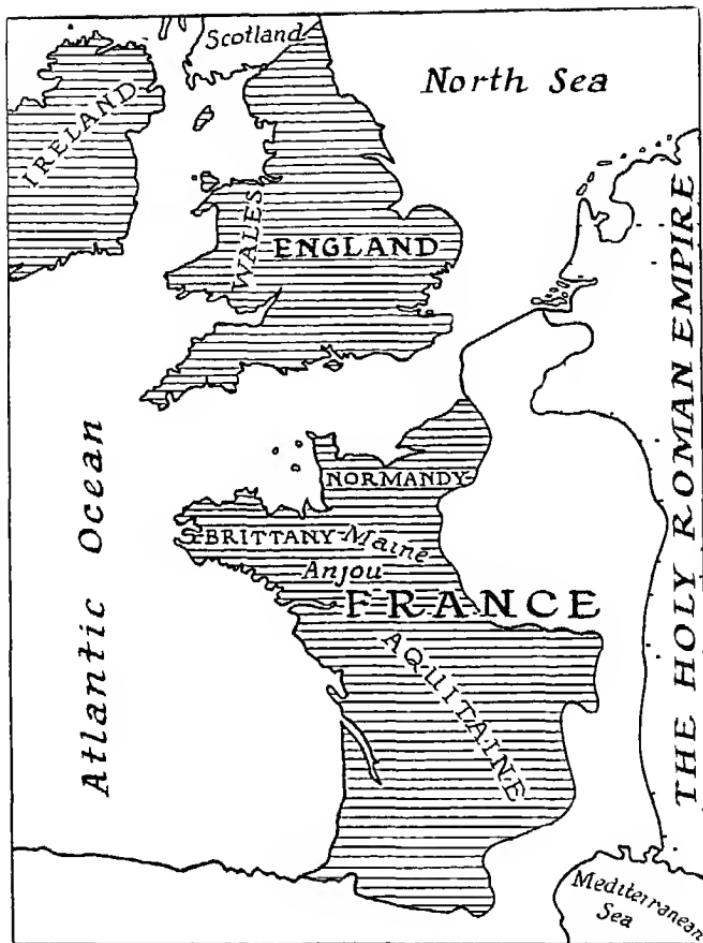
Henry also had dealings with Scotland. Early in his reign Malcolm IV met him at Chester and gave up his claim to the northern counties of England in return for the earldom of Huntingdon, which had belonged to the Scottish King's ancestors. Later, William, the Lion of Scotland, supported a revolt of Henry's sons and barons against the King and was defeated and captured at Alnwick (1174). After this, in the Treaty of Falaise, William was forced to acknowledge Henry as overlord of Scotland, and this concession became important in the thirteenth century, when Edward I of England tried to take the Scottish crown.

#### HENRY'S STRUGGLES WITH THE BARONS

If Henry had had only to deal with England his reign might have been a less troubled one. But more than half France belonged to him and he was one of the most powerful and important rulers in Europe. From the Norman kings of England he had inherited, through his mother, Matilda, England and Normandy. From his father, Geoffrey of Anjou, he inherited Anjou, Maine, and Touraine. He married a great heiress, Eleanor of Aquitaine, with whom he obtained the French duchy of Aquitaine and its dependencies.

Henry, therefore, had a good deal more land on the Continent than the earlier Norman kings had possessed. Though he did excellent work in England he was a Frenchman, who spoke French and ruled more French than English territory. Therefore the history of his foreign possessions and of his dealings with the French King is mixed up with the English history of this period.

Because Henry held so much land in France his power was dangerous to the French crown. The King of France was always eager to make trouble for him, and was ready to support either



THE ANGEVIN EMPIRE OF HENRY II

Note how much land Henry held in France. This explains the French King's attempts to weaken his power by encouraging risings against him

his sons or his barons against him when they were discontented. Many of the barons resented Henry's strong government, which prevented them from doing as they pleased, but the greater part of his troubles came from his sons, who were ambitious and restless, and were encouraged to rebel against their father not only by the French King, but also by their mother, Eleanor of

Aquitaine She did not agree well with her husband and took this means of avenging herself upon him.

Henry had four sons, Henry, Geoffrey, Richard and John, and, following the French custom, he had his eldest son, Henry, crowned during his own lifetime. He then put Normandy, Maine, and Anjou into the young Henry's charge, and gave Aquitaine to Richard. Geoffrey was provided for by a marriage with the heiress of Brittany, but John, nicknamed "Lackland," the youngest of the sons, received no land at all. This arrangement worked badly from the first. Henry was accustomed to ruling his own possessions, and his sons felt that they had neither real authority nor sufficient money allowed them. Moreover, when John had to be provided for the others were unwilling that he should be granted any share of their provinces.

In 1173, when Henry wished to give John three castles in Anjou, which belonged to the young Henry, his sons joined the French King in making war on their father, and most of Henry's barons, as well as the King of Scotland, supported them. This rising is known as the "Great Feudal Revolt," and it says much for Henry's ability and power that he was able to subdue it. Against his enemies, however, he had the help of the Church, the English people, and most of the English earls. In 1174 William the Lion of Scotland was defeated and captured at Alnwick. After this the rebellion in England was soon suppressed, and Henry seized and destroyed many of the rebels' castles. He had no more trouble with the barons in England, for they found that he was too strong for rebellion to be wise or profitable.

The war abroad did not last long after the suppression of the English rebellion. Henry made peace with his sons, and tried to please them by granting them large incomes. But they were not easy to content. The young Henry, though foolish and unwise, was brave and attractive. He made many friends who were always ready to encourage him to quarrel with his father, and there was constant trouble between the two, until the younger Henry's death in 1183. His father, in spite of their quarrels, deeply regretted him. A few years later Geoffrey died too. After this the last years of Henry's reign were troubled and unquiet. His son Richard was discontented because his father would not allow him to be crowned during his own lifetime, and joined the French King against Henry. King Henry, not very

wisely, wanted Richard to give up his duchy of Aquitaine to John, who was still without suitable estates. Finally both Richard and John joined France in war against their father, and the old King was defeated and forced to make terms. The humiliation of this helped to kill Henry, who died soon afterwards, broken-hearted. The many troubles of his reign abooad contrast with the strong government he established in England, which has caused him to be considered by some people to be the greatest of all English Kings.

## HENRY II 1154-1189

POSSESSIONS were		
England	}	From his mother, MATILDA, daughter of Henry I
Normandy		
Anjou		
Maine		From his father, GEOFFREY OF ANJOU
Touraine		
Aquitaine	—	From his wife, ELEANOR
Brittany	—	By the marriage of his son GLOFRAY to CONSTANCE OF BRITTANY

	<i>England Political</i>	<i>The Church</i>	<i>French Possessions</i>	<i>Scotland and Ireland</i>
1150	1153 Treaty of Wallingford 1154 Henry II King of England 1155 Restoration of order			
1160		1162 Becket Archbishop 1164 Constitutions of Clarendon		1157 Malcolm gave up northern counties
1165	1166 Assize of Clarendon			1166 Dermot of Leinster sought help in England
1170	1170 Inquest of Sheriffs	1170 Murder of Becket	French possessions divided among Henry's sons	1171 Henry "Lord of Ireland" 1172 Synod of Cashel
1173		GREAT FEUDAL REVOLT.		
1175	1176 Assize at Northampton		Quarrels of Henry II and his sons	1174 William the Lion captured Treaty of Falaise
1180	1181 Assize of Arms			1183 Death of young Henry
1185				1186 Death of Geoffrey Quarrel of Henry II with Richard and the French King
1190	1189	DEATH OF HENRY II		

## CHAPTER X

### THE CRUSADES AND THE REIGN OF RICHARD I

#### CHRISTENDOM AND THE SARACEN

The barbarian invasions, that destroyed the Roman empire, divided western Europe into many kingdoms, but in spite of national distinctions throughout the Middle Ages the people of Europe continued to feel that they belonged to a single community "Christendom" of the Christian faith. Although the feudal barons quarrelled almost continually with each other and with their overlords, they felt a bond of fellowship against the non-Christian people who lived outside the borders of Europe. Perhaps the most interesting thing about the wars known as the Crusades is that in them "Christendom" combined, though with much bickering and division, against a common foe.

The object of the Crusades was to re-capture the "Holy Land" of Palestine from the Mohammedans, so that Christian pilgrims could visit the Holy Places without danger. For a long time Palestine had been in the hands of Mohammedan Arabs, and these people were not hostile to the Christians, in whose charge they left the Holy Places. But during the eleventh century another of those great movements of nations, which had been going on for many hundreds of years, took place. The Turks spread over Asia, conquering the Arabs of Syria and Palestine, and capturing Jerusalem in 1076.

Like the Arabs, the Turks were Mohammedans, but they were warlike and cruel, and ill-treated and oppressed Christian pilgrims. The people of Christendom were indignant at what they heard about the atrocities of the Turks, or "Saracens," as they were more usually called. Then, too, the Saracens began to attack the Eastern Empire. This Empire was the one established in the third century, when the Roman Empire was divided into two parts. It was an important barrier between Europe and the Mohammedans, for the Greeks of the Eastern

Emperors were Christians, although they belonged to their own Greek Church and not to the Roman one. Christian Europe was, therefore, not unwilling to help the Emperor at Constantinople.

This Emperor, Alexius Comnenus, asked for help, not from the European kings, but from the Pope, whose influence spread through all the European kingdoms. The Pope, Urban I., had already heard much about the ill-treatment of pilgrims by the Turks. In 1095 he summoned a Council of the Church to meet at Clermont, and there called upon the people of Christendom to unite to rescue the Holy Land from the Saracens. Urban's preaching aroused an enthusiastic response. The people of Europe were eager to rescue the places made sacred by their religion. Also many went to the East in the hope of making their fortunes, just as the Normans had gone to make their fortunes in Sicily or England.

### THE FIRST CRUSADE

The men who promised to take part in the war against the Saracens wore a Cross as their badge, and were known as "Crusaders". No king took part in the First Crusade, but many of their important vassals joined it. One of its leaders was Robert, Duke of Normandy, the son of William the Conqueror.

The first to set out for the Holy Land were a great mob of poor people led by a preacher, known as Peter the Hermit, and by Walter the Penniless, a knight. As these people were undisciplined, and almost unarmed, most of them were either lost, killed, or starved before they reached the Holy Land at all. They were followed by the army of the great nobles and their followers, the leaders of which were Hugh of Vermandois, the French King's brother, Robert of Normandy, Raymond of Toulouse, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Bohemund of Sicily.

Europe was certainly more peaceful without these warlike lords, but the Emperor at Constantinople, whom they had gone to help, found them so greedy and threatening that he was glad when they left his capital and continued their journey. They marched through Asia Minor and, in the year 1199, captured Jerusalem from the Saracens.

When the Crusaders had conquered the Holy Land they did with it as the Normans had done in England and Sicily—they



From the painting by Glyn Philpot R.A. in St Stephen's Hall, Westminster

CŒUR DE LION AS CRUSAIDER

King Richard the First, afterwards called Cœur de Lion, leaves England with an expeditionary force to join the Crusade in Palestine for the recovery of Jerusalem from the Saracens, Dec 11th, 1189

divided it up among themselves and decided to live there Godfrey of Bouillon became king of Jerusalem, and his brother, Baldwin, was made Count of Edessa, while Bohemund of Sicily became Prince of Antioch. Each of these rulers granted land to his followers, as was the custom in Europe, and built strong castles, on the European model, to defend his possessions. Although the Crusaders gradually learnt Eastern customs they kept their European feudalism and organised their states on feudal lines.

### CONDITIONS IN THE EAST THE SECOND CRUSADE

After the First Crusade, the people of Europe had much more to do with the East than before. It was again possible for pilgrims to go to the Holy Land, and many of the nobles of western Europe had friends or relations in the Crusading states. Eastern trade was very profitable, and Eastern luxuries began to appear in Europe, brought by the merchants of Mediterranean ports, like Venice and Genoa, which, through the profits of this trade, flourished and grew rich.

Christendom continued to be interested in the safety of the Holy Land, and of the pilgrims who visited it. A band of knights was organised to protect these pilgrims, and took the name of "Knights Templar," from the Holy Temple at Jerusalem. Since their work was both religious and warlike, they lived partly like monks, and partly like soldiers. Like monks they vowed to remain poor, not to marry, and to obey their superior, and they lived together in houses that belonged to their Order. But their work was to fight against the Saracens and to defend the Holy Land. Another order of knights, founded at Jerusalem, was that of the "Knights of St. John," also called the "Knights Hospitaller," since they not only fought the infidels, but also cared for sick pilgrims.

The Crusading kingdoms in the East were surrounded by enemies. Instead of uniting against the Saracens, their leaders were constantly quarrelling with each other, and with the Emperor at Constantinople, who might have been their ally. Because of their danger St Bernard preached a Second Crusade, in the middle of the twelfth century. Though Louis VII. of France, and Conrad, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, took part in it, it was a complete failure. Then, in the later

years of the twelfth century, came the Third Crusade, which is the one that concerns English history most closely, for one of its principal leaders was Richard I, King of England.

So long as the Saracens had been divided and without a capable leader, the Crusaders had been able to hold out against them. But, during the twelfth century a succession of men, who



EUROPE AND THE CRUSADED STATES IN SYRIA 11TH AND 12TH CENTURIES

The crusading states are shown at their greatest extent. In spite of new crusades to save them they were constantly losing ground to the Turks. Notice how the Crusades brought Western Europeans into contact with the East.

were both good generals and strong rulers, built up a powerful and united Saracen kingdom in Syria. In 1187 the Saracen ruler, Saladin, defeated the Christians in the Battle of Hattin, and captured Jerusalem itself, leaving only a few coast towns in Christian hands.

The fall of Jerusalem roused Europe to the need for another Crusade, and its kings determined to set out in person to rescue

the Holy Land. The first to go was the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, but he died during the journey through Asia Minor, and his German army fell into confusion. The armies of France and England then set out—that of France being led by Philip Augustus, the king who had quarrelled so often with Henry II of England, while the English leader was Richard I, called the "Lion-hearted," because of his courage.

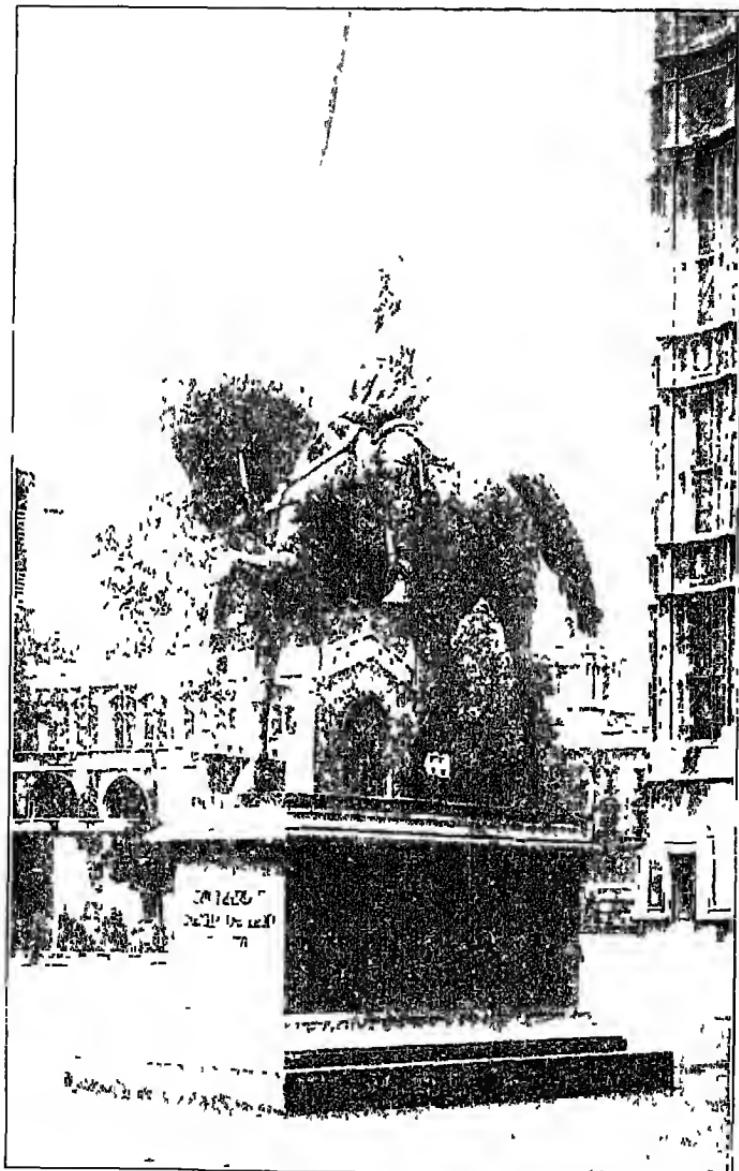
### RICHARD I AND THE THIRD CRUSADE

Richard I was a great soldier and adventurer, who had no interest in his English kingdom. His youth had been spent in the south of France, as ruler of the duchy of Aquitaine, where the nobles amused themselves by writing poetry, singing songs, and fighting with each other. His life was modelled on the chivalrous romances which were so popular in his day, and though his people admired him, as a king he did practically nothing for them.

On his way to the Holy Land, Richard spent a winter in Sicily, where he married Berengaria, the daughter of the King of Navarre. He then sailed to Cyprus (1191), which he attacked and conquered, because its ruler was unfriendly to the Crusaders. When he arrived in Palestine, he found that the French army was already there, and that the Crusaders were besieging the town of Acre, which the Saracens had taken from them.

During the siege of Acre the Christian leaders quarrelled constantly with each other. Philip Augustus of France was jealous of Richard and opposed him as much as possible. At the same time, two of the Crusading Lords, who lived in Palestine, Guy de Lusignan, and Conrad of Montferrat, were quarrelling over their claim to be king of Jerusalem, although Jerusalem was still in the hands of the Saracens. After Acre had been captured, the Crusaders devoted their time to settling the dispute about the crown of Jerusalem, instead of continuing the war. In the end it was decided that Guy, whose claim was supported by Richard, was to be king, and by this time Philip Augustus was so discontented that he sailed home, taking most of the French army with him.

After Philip had gone, the Crusaders advanced upon Jerusalem, but though Richard's good generalship gave them many successes, they did not take the Holy City—to the great



STATUE OF RICHARD I AT WESTMINSTER

*Will F. Taylor*

disappointment of the English King. Like Richard, the Saracen ruler, Saladin, was a good soldier, and the Crusaders could not break his power. So, in 1192, a truce was made between Christians and Saracens by which the Christians were allowed to keep the town of Jaffa, and Christian pilgrims were to be free to visit Jerusalem. After this Richard set out on his return to England, and the Third Crusade was at an end.

### THE LATER CRUSADES

Although the Third Crusade failed to capture Jerusalem, it had saved the power of the Christians in the Holy Land from complete destruction. Pilgrims now passed backwards and forwards without too much danger, and the merchants of Venice and of other Italian cities increased their trade with the East, so that they not only made fortunes for themselves and their cities, but helped to spread Eastern fashions and luxuries throughout Europe.

After the Third Crusade the crusading spirit, which had made the Crusaders, in spite of their quarrels and greed, really zealous for the recovery of the Holy Land, died down. The armies of the Fourth Crusade (1198-1204) were so intent upon plunder that they never reached the Holy Land, but besieged and sacked Constantinople itself, and set up a new Latin Empire there, under Baldwin of Flanders. This attack upon the Eastern Empire shocked the Pope and the people of Europe. It weakened the strength of the Christians in the East, for the new Latin Empire was disunited, and lasted for less than a hundred years, when Greek power was restored once more.

From this time onwards the only person who did much towards restoring the Holy Land to the Christians was the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II. His religious views were so daring that he was scarcely regarded as a Christian at all, and, though he obtained, by a treaty with the Saracens, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem (1228), his expedition was never granted the holy name of a Crusade. Then, in 1244, a new band of Turks reconquered Jerusalem, and only a little land along the coast was left to the Christians. St Louis of France, who died while on his second Crusade, and Edward I of England, led expeditions to the East, but all attempts to save the Holy Land proved fruitless. In 1291 the Saracens captured Acre, the last

of the Christian strongholds, and the great Crusading movement, which had for so long been dying out, came to an end.

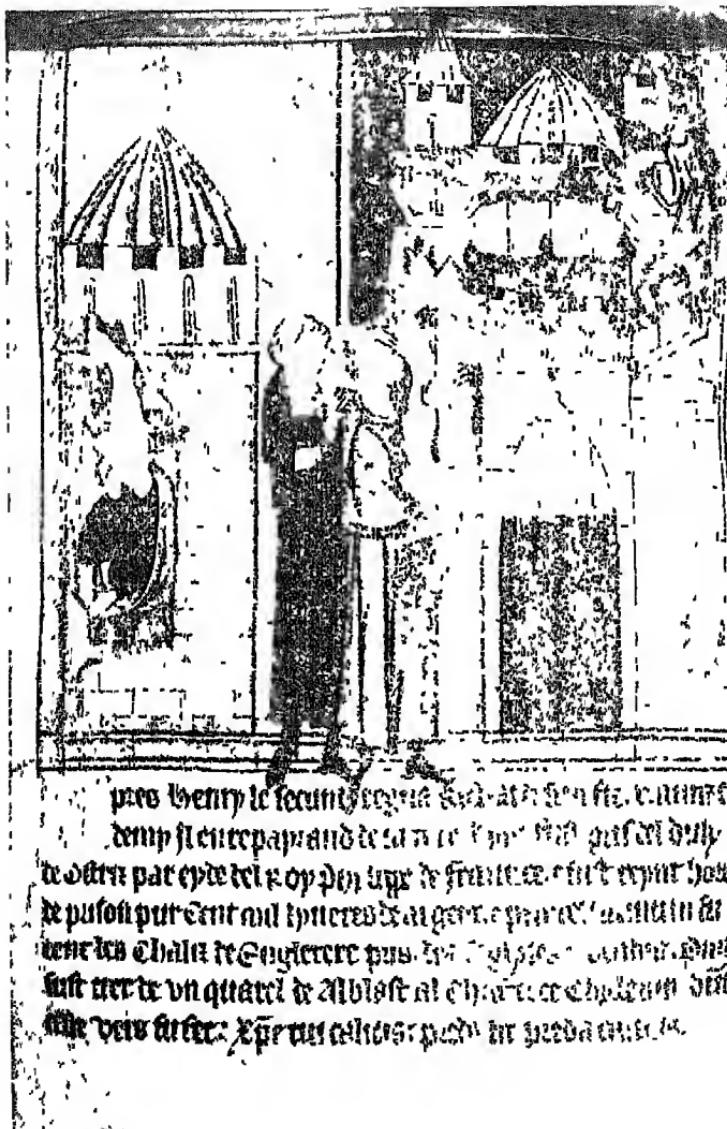
It left the Holy Land still in the hands of the Saracens, but it had done much to encourage commerce with the East, and to increase the prosperity of Italian cities like Venice and Genoa, which commanded the trading routes of the Mediterranean.

### **ENGLAND IN THE REIGN OF RICHARD I**

In his anxiety to win glory in the Third Crusade, Richard I had regarded England chiefly as a source from which he might obtain money. He sold the offices of state, and any kind of privileges that he had power to grant, and that men were willing to buy. Townsmen were growing rich, and took the opportunity to buy from the King charters which gave them the right to rule their own town. Thus the period was an important one in the history of our cities. It was also important in the government of the country, because it showed that the efficient system of administration which Henry II had built up was strong enough to keep order, even during the King's absence. The fact that the country could be well governed without the King made the barons, discontented with Henry II's limitation of their power, begin to think of controlling the government themselves. In the next century they made attempts to do so.

Richard had left England in the charge of William Longchamp, his justiciar. The heavy taxes that Longchamp was forced to raise for the King's expenses made him unpopular. In 1191 Richard's brother, John, took advantage of this to depose the justiciar and to make himself regent. As Richard was returning from his crusade (1193), he fell into the hands of Leopold of Austria, with whom he had quarrelled in the Holy Land, and who now gave his prisoner to the Emperor Henry VI. Neither John nor King Philip of France wished Richard to return to England, so they united in offering bribes to the Emperor to keep him prisoner, for John hoped to make himself king of England. But Eleanor, the widow of Henry II, and the mother of Richard and John, encouraged Richard's officials in their task of raising money for his ransom, which was obtained by means of very heavy taxes, and in 1194 the King was set free.

England rejoiced over the return of her King, but it only heralded more taxes, for the rest of Richard's reign was devoted



IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH OF RICHARD I

to quarrels with France. On his return he had made peace both with John and Philip, but there were disputes about the frontier of Normandy. To defend this frontier Richard built a castle in a very strong position, and called it "Chateau Gaillard" to show his careless defiance of French power. He left England to be governed by the justiciar, Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, and once more there were heavy taxes for the King's wars which met with some resistance from the English barons, headed by a bishop, St Hugh of Lincoln, for the country was growing more and more tired of royal exactions. Then in 1199 Richard went to war with one of his vassals in the Limousin, in support of his claim to part of a treasure which had been found there. While he was besieging the castle of Chaluz he was killed by a cross-bow bolt. He had always been a popular hero, and his memory was regarded with more affection because of the misgovernment of his successor, John. But, actually, Richard's virtues were those of a knight-errant, not a king. He did not trouble to rule his country, or to save his people from oppression, and the heavy taxes of his reign wearied the barons, and paved the way for their attempts, in the next two reigns, to uphold their own privileges, and to bring the king under their own control.

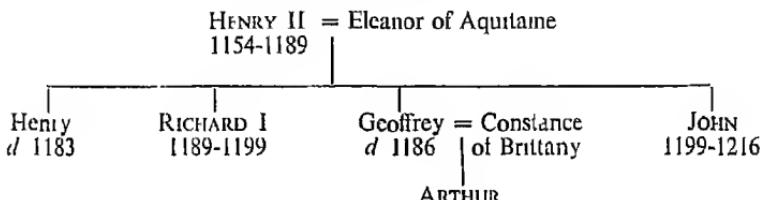
	<i>The Crusades</i>		<i>Contemporary Events in England</i>
1050			
1075	1076 Turkish Conquest of Jerusalem.		1066 Battle of Hastings
	1095 Council of Clermont	Wm I 1066-87	
	1096-9 1ST CRUSADE Crusade of Robert of Normandy Jerusalem captured and Crusading states established	William II 1087-1100	1086 Domesday Book
1100			1096 Robert pledged Normandy to William
1125	1146-8 2ND CRUSADE—a failure	Henry I 1100-35	1106 Battle of Tench-brae
1150	Growth of strong Saracen monarchy in Syria	Stephen Henry I 1135-54	Civil war of Stephen's reign
1175	1187 Battle of Hattin Saladin captured Jerusalem	Henry II 1154-1189	
	1188-92 3RD CRUSADE Crusade of Richard I	Richard I 1189-1199	1191 Fall of Longchamp
	1191, Capture of Acre Crusading states saved		1193-4 Imprisonment of Richard
1200	1198-1204 4TH CRUSADE Conquered and sacked Constantinople Established a Latin empire that lasted till 1261	John 1199-1216	Loss of Normandy
	1217 5TH CRUSADE—a failure		1215 Magna Carta
1225	1228 Emperor Frederick II recovered Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem for the Christians		
	1244 Jerusalem recaptured by Turks	Henry III 1216-1272	
1250	1248-54 6TH CRUSADE, 1st Crusade of St Louis—unsuccessful		Struggle between King and barons
	1270-2 7TH CRUSADE 2nd Crusade of St Louis and Crusade of Edward of England—unsuccessful		1265 Battle of Evesham
1275	1291 Acre (last Christian stronghold) captured by Turks	Edward I 1272-1307	Conquest of Wales
1300			1295 Model Parliament

## CHAPTER XI

### STRUGGLE OF KING AND BARONS, AND BEGINNING OF PARLIAMENT

#### JOHN AND THE LOSS OF NORMANDY

When Richard I died more than one person claimed the right to succeed him. John, the youngest son of Henry II, was determined to seize the Crown, but Geoffrey, one of his elder brothers, had left a son, Arthur, who had a better claim by descent, but who was still only a boy.



At this time less was thought about following the strict line of descent, than about having a ruler strong enough to keep order, so, from the first, John had a better chance of obtaining the crown than his nephew. But when Brittany declared for Arthur, because his mother, Constance of Brittany, had been heiress to that duchy, most of the barons of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine joined him. John soon triumphed over his nephew's supporters and was free to rule his father's lands.

John was not a good ruler. He was clever, cultured and good-looking, and could, when he pleased, be easy and charming in manner. But his whole life had been spent in intrigue and treachery, first against his father, and then against his brother, Richard I. He was cruel and faithless, so, in the end, the greater part of his subjects hated him. From the first he had troubled himself little about pleasing anyone, though, as Arthur was still alive to claim his crown, and Philip Augustus of France was eager to support any opposition to the ruler of the great possessions of the House of Anjou, it was necessary for John's safety that he should be careful.

In 1200 he angered the English barons by divorcing his wife, Avice of Gloucester, while keeping most of her land. He then angered the barons of Poitou by marrying Isabella of Angoulême, a beautiful heiress, who was betrothed to Hugh of Lusignan, count of La Marche. Hugh and his friends appealed to Philip of France, who was John's overlord for his French possessions, and Philip summoned him to come to Paris for trial in the year 1202.

John had no intention of being tried by Philip, whom he knew to be his enemy. He took no notice of the summons, and the French King declared that he had forfeited his lands, and marched into Normandy to take them. Once more he supported Arthur's cause, but the boy was captured by John's men and imprisoned at Falaise. Very conveniently for John, he then disappeared. Though it was uncertain what had happened to him, it was generally believed that he had been murdered by his uncle's orders.

In Normandy the French were successful, and John did little against them. He seems to have been in an indolent mood, and kept saying that he would soon bestir himself and win back all that he was losing. But he did not bestir himself, and Chateau Gaillard, Richard's new castle, was captured after an eight months' siege (1204). After this the French quickly conquered Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou, and the great Angevin empire of Henry II., that had dwarfed the power of the French King was gone for ever. Only Gascony, in the south of France remained in English hands, for the Gascons loved neither the French nor the English, but preferred an English ruler because he lived considerably further away from them than a French one.

John's power was greatly weakened. England was to gain something from his defeat, for she was now no longer only one among the many possessions of her rulers, and her barons no longer held land abroad.

The distinction between Norman and Angevin conquerors and native English was beginning to disappear through intermarriage. Though the upper classes in England still spoke the French language they were no longer entirely foreign by birth, and now that they ceased to hold foreign lands their interests became English. So England was beginning to become an independent and united nation.

## QUARREL WITH THE POPE

John now embarked upon a quarrel with the Church. Though Henry II had lost much by the murder of Becket, he had managed to lessen the independence obtained by the Church in Stephen's reign, and to get the right of choosing bishops back into his own hand. When Hubert Walter, the Archbishop of Canterbury, died (1205), John naturally expected to tell the monks of Canterbury whom they must elect to replace him. But the monks were determined to choose an archbishop of their own, and they secretly elected Reginald, their sub-prior, and sent him to Rome, so that the Pope might invest him with his office. When John heard about this, he flew into a rage—all the Angevin kings had terrible tempers—and ordered the monks to set aside their election and to choose his own candidate, John de Grey, who was also sent to Rome. The Pope, Innocent III, happened to be a strong and able man, who was bent upon increasing the power of the Church, and saw an opportunity to assert his own right to choose English churchmen. So he accepted neither of the candidates sent to Rome, but gave the Archbishopric of Canterbury to Cardinal Stephen Langton, a learned and religious Englishman, who lived in Rome. Langton was in many ways an excellent choice, but John was not going to give up his right to choose bishops and archbishops, and refused to accept him. To compel him to give way, the Pope placed England under an Interdict (1208), which meant that churches were closed, and the only religious services held were baptisms. No one could be married, and the dead were buried in unconsecrated ground and without a service. The country suffered more than the King, who, instead of obeying the Pope, seized the goods and money of the clergy who carried out the Interdict. To punish him the Pope put him outside the Church altogether, by declaring him excommunicated (1209), but John does not seem to have had any religious fears, for he remained undaunted, and declared war on the whole Church by seizing the property of the bishops. With this he hired soldiers, forced Scots and Welsh to do homage to him, and reduced the barons of Ireland to order.

So far it seemed that John had had the best of the quarrel, and if he had had the support of his subjects he might have succeeded in defying the Pope. But the barons hated him, and

the churchmen, could not forgive the way in which he had plundered them. So when, in 1211, the Pope threatened him with deposition, for Innocent claimed that the Pope had the power to depose kings, John found no support at home. Then Philip of France began to raise troops for the invasion of England. In danger on all sides, John was quick to see that he must make terms with the Pope, submitted, accepted Stephen Langton as archbishop, and agreed to pay a yearly tribute to Rome and to hold England as a fief from the Papacy (1213).

Innocent had gained a victory, though the feudal overlordship of England was more a matter of form than of real authority. John also gained a great deal, for not only was the Pope no longer supporting his enemies, but had actually become his protector. Also the English, under William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, destroyed the French fleet, and so ended the fear of invasion. It seemed that the King had now a good chance of re-establishing the power he had come so near to losing.

John could, when he chose, act very energetically and he made an alliance with the Emperor Otto and the Count of Flanders against Philip of France. He saw that if he could overcome Philip, he would be free of all external enemies and able to crush the discontented barons in England. So the fate of England now hung upon a battle at Bouvines (1214) between the allies and the French King, a battle in which few Englishmen took part. When Philip was victorious and the alliance against him was broken up John had to return to England to face his discontented subjects.

### THE GREAT CHARTER

The barons were ready for him. The new Archbishop, Stephen Langton, had lead them Henry I's Charter of Liberties, and they were determined to make John grant them something of the same kind. Their power had been lessened by the strong government of Henry II and a great deal of money had been taken from them by the heavy taxation of Richard I. John's misgovernment brought their discontent to a head. They were now determined to make the King promise to respect their privileges and those feudal rights that kings had been struggling since the Conquest to limit. The Church united with the barons, for it, too, wished to carry on the old struggle of Anselm and



*From painting by Ernest Normand in the Royal Exchange London*  
**KING JOHN SIGNING MAGNA CARTA**

Becket against the King's interference. The townspeople also were ready to oppose the King because they wanted to safeguard their new charters. And, though all these classes of people were selfish in their demands and cared only for their own privileges, the fact that they united made the resistance to the King a national one—the first united movement of the English nation. The result of this was that, though the ordinary people, most of whom were still unfree labourers, had no part in the quarrel, the whole nation won something by it.

John hated the idea of giving way, and hired foreign soldiers to defend his castles. But the barons, led by William Marshall, Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, and Humphrey Bohun, Earl of Hereford, marched to London, where they were joined by the citizens, and John had to grant their demands at Runnymede, near Windsor. These demands were embodied in the document known as "Magna Carta" or the "Great Charter."

(1) The Church was to be free. This was a vague promise, but it meant that the Church claimed to be free to obey the Pope's authority, and disregard, if necessary the power of the Crown.

(2) The barons made the King promise that he would not exact scutages and aids (except the customary aids to ransom the King, to knight his eldest son, and to marry his eldest daughter) without the consent of the Great Council, to which the barons were to be summoned. The amount of money to be paid in "relief" when a tenant took over an estate was limited, and rules were laid down for the exercise of the feudal rights of wardship and marriage of heirs and heiresses.

(3) The townspeople obtained the recognition of their new charters and rights, and permission for merchants to enter and leave the country freely.

(4) The barons had to promise to grant to their tenants the same privileges as they received from the King. A royal court of justice (Court of Common Pleas) was established at Westminster, so that people no longer had to follow the King's court around the country for their cases to be tried. It was also promised that no free man should be imprisoned or punished without judgment by his equals, and this was a very important concession, though, since most labourers were unfree, they did not benefit by it. Also, where the barons had made the King promise in the charter, to respect their liberties, by which they meant their feudal privileges, in later centuries these liberties were taken to mean

the freedom of the nation, so the Charter, which had been intended to guard feudal privileges, became a great safeguard of national freedom.

John had been forced to submit, but he did not intend to keep his promises. He persuaded the Pope to absolve him from his oath to observe the Charter, and he sent hired soldiers, under Falkes de Bréauté, to plunder the estates of the barons. The barons then offered the crown to Louis of Fiance, the son of Philip Augustus, and the French invaded England. Only the royal castles held out for John, and he seemed likely to be dethroned, but in crossing the Wash in one of his marches, his baggage and treasures were overwhelmed by the tide. The shock of this loss heightened a fever which he had developed. He died at Newark (1216), leaving his kingdom already half-conquered by the French.

### HENRY III

When John died, it seemed that the French were about to conquer England. Then two powerful earls, William Marshall of Pembroke and Ralph of Chester, took up the cause of John's little son, Henry III, a boy of ten, and, with the help of John's hired soldiers, began to drive out the French. In 1217 the French troops who were besieging Lincoln were defeated, while Hubert de Burgh won a victory at sea, the Battle of Dover and prevented French reinforcements from reaching England. These English successes caused Louis to make peace in the Treaty of Lambeth, and to leave the country.

William Marshall governed England for the little King till his death in 1219, when his place was taken by Hubert de Burgh. Hubert was the last of the ministers trained by Henry II. He was both a soldier and statesman, and, as well as defeating the French at sea, had held Dover Castle against them, when most of southern England supported their cause. He drove out the foreign soldiers hired by John, and reduced the country to order. This made him hated by many of the barons, who preferred their own independence to strong government. When the King was twenty he was declared old enough to rule the country for himself, but Hubert remained very powerful, until in 1232, the discontented barons and the King's favourites managed to persuade Henry to get rid of him. All his good work was forgotten, and he was accused of robbing the King to enrich himself.

Although he escaped from the imprisonment to which he had been sent, he never returned to power, and died in 1234.

Though Henry III was a much better man than his father had been, he was not an efficient king. He was an educated and cultivated man, with artistic tastes, but he never understood the



*British Museum*

CORONATION OF HENRY III

art of government. Though weak and at times easily influenced, he was sometimes obstinate, and suspicious, mistreating people too much to appoint ministers to rule the country, and trying to do everything himself. To those who served him well he could be jealous and ungrateful, as he had been to de Burgh, but he was generous to those who demanded his help, and his court

became a refuge for any one who had a claim on him. He was grateful to the Pope for helping him to obtain his throne, and this caused him to put up with papal interference that annoyed his subjects.

If all English kings had been as strong and clever as Henry II they would gradually have got the country under their control. But John's misrule had forced the country to assert its rights in Magna Carta, and now the misrule of Henry III was to lead to the re-assertion and firmer establishment of those rights.

Henry angered his subjects by his love for foreigners and his attitude towards the Pope. England had lost the French possessions of its kings, and was beginning to feel that it was an independent country and to resent being plundered by adventurers from abroad. Unfortunately, Henry had many foreign connections, and fresh streams of hangers-on were always making claims upon him. Poitevins came to share the good fortunes of the man, Peter des Roches, who had been the King's tutor. Provençals and Savoyards came with Henry's wife, Eleanor of Provence, and even the Archbishopric of Canterbury was given to a foreigner, Boniface of Savoy. Then Henry made an attempt to regain the duchy of Aquitaine, and, having been defeated at Taillebourg and Saintes, brought back with him his half-brothers, the sons of Hugh de Lusignan, who had married his mother. All these people had to be given estates or positions, and as the country was very poor, the barons grew more and more indignant.

The Pope, also, was taking a good deal of wealth from England. The Popes were playing an important part in European affairs and had many expenses. They were beginning to tax the clergy of various counties just as a feudal overlord taxed his vassals. This made many English clergy discontented. They would have been glad if the King would have protected them. But Henry was on good terms with the Pope. He even allowed himself to be persuaded into foolish schemes by which the Pope was to make the King's brother, Richard of Cornwall, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and Henry's little son, Edmund, King of Sicily. The schemes not only failed, but proved very expensive, and in 1257 Henry had to call a Great Council of his barons in order to ask them for money to pay his debts.

### THE BARONS' WARS

This gave the barons the opportunity they wanted. They were tired of Henry's foreign favourites, his support of the Pope's demands for money, and his attempts to rule the country as he pleased. At various times they had forced him to confirm the Charters, and to promise to mend his ways, but he constantly broke his promises. So they now decided to make arrangements for the better government of England.

When they came to meet the King they were fully armed, and for this reason the Council that followed is known as the "Mad Parliament" (1258). The foreigners were driven out, and a Council of twenty-four, twelve of whom were chosen by the King and twelve by the barons, was appointed to draw up reforms. The object of this was to take power out of the King's hands, and to put him under the control of the barons. A Council of State, with fifteen members, was appointed to help the King to rule the country. Another Council of Twelve was chosen by the barons to meet the Fifteen three times a year to discuss matters of State. This new arrangement was known as the Provisions of Oxford.

Henry agreed to these arrangements, but, as usual, did not keep his promises. The new government neglected its task of reform, and it seemed that no improvement had been made. So a number of discontented knights and nobles united under Henry's son, Prince Edward, and managed to effect some reforms, mostly in local government. These reforms were known as the Provisions of Westminster (1259). The truth was that the barons were disunited, and so could get little done. One party, headed by Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, could not agree with another, whose leader was Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester.

De Montfort was a very unusual man. He was a Gascon, who had married the King's sister, Eleanor, and had for some time governed Gascony, but he was one of the foremost men in driving other foreigners out of England. He was able, but inclined to be harsh, and to wish to get all authority into his own hands. The King took advantage of the quarrels of his barons to get the Pope to absolve him from his oath to keep the Provisions, and matters might have remained at a deadlock had not Gloucester died, leaving de Montfort to head the opposition.

De Montfort could always be trusted to act energetically, and when he found that the King did not intend to keep his promises, he prepared for war. To prevent this, both parties agreed to refer the quarrel to Louis IX of France for a decision. The French King had had trouble with his own barons, and, like most kings, disapproved of the idea of baronial government. So, without being influenced by Henry's misdeeds, he decided, in the Mise of Amiens (1264), in favour of the King. De Montfort



HENRY III

refused to accept the verdict. He had the support of the Londoners, and of many barons and churchmen, so he appealed to arms, and defeated the King in the Battle of Lewes, taking prisoner both Henry III and his son, Edward.

The country was now in de Montfort's hands, and, in the Mise of Lewes, he forced Henry once more to agree to keep the Provisions. He then called a Parliament of his supporters, which is famous because he summoned to it not only barons and

churchmen, but also two knights from each shire, and two citizens from each city that favoured him. This Parliament concluded the arrangements begun in the Mise of Lewes, but de Montfort's power was already beginning to fail, as the barons once more lost their unity. He quarrelled with Gilbert of Gloucester, the son of his old enemy, and Gloucester united with the barons of the Welsh borders against him. Then Prince Edward managed to escape, and also joined the marchers. De Montfort was soon deserted by every one except his own family and his personal followers. He met the King's forces in the Battle of Evesham (1265), in which Prince Edward, who was clever enough to have learnt a great deal from Earl Simon, defeated him by the same tactics as de Montfort himself had used at Lewes. De Montfort was killed at Evesham, and after this the remnant of his supporters were soon overcome. At first all the lands of his party were confiscated, but the royalists found that it was wiser only to fine the rebels, and then leave them to settle down peacefully again.

The attempt of the barons to rule England was at an end. A Parliament at Marlborough (1267) swept away the new system of government, leaving the King free of all restrictions, except those of the Charters. But the struggle had not been without result. Many foreigners had been driven out. The Pope, though he continued to interfere in Church government, no longer played a part in English politics as overlord. Also progress had been made in the development of Parliament.

### THE GROWTH OF PARLIAMENT

The English Parliament was not invented by any particular person or persons; indeed it cannot be said to have been invented at all. It grew up very gradually, and almost accidentally out of other institutions.

It was in Henry III's reign that the name "Parliament" (a talking-place) was first given to the central governing-body of England. But a new name does not always mean a new thing, and the first "Parliaments" were only the feudal Great Council, of the King's vassals, that had existed since the Conquest. Magna Carta had declared that no feudal aids, except the ordinary ones, were to be collected without the consent of this assembly, and that each important baron was to be summoned.

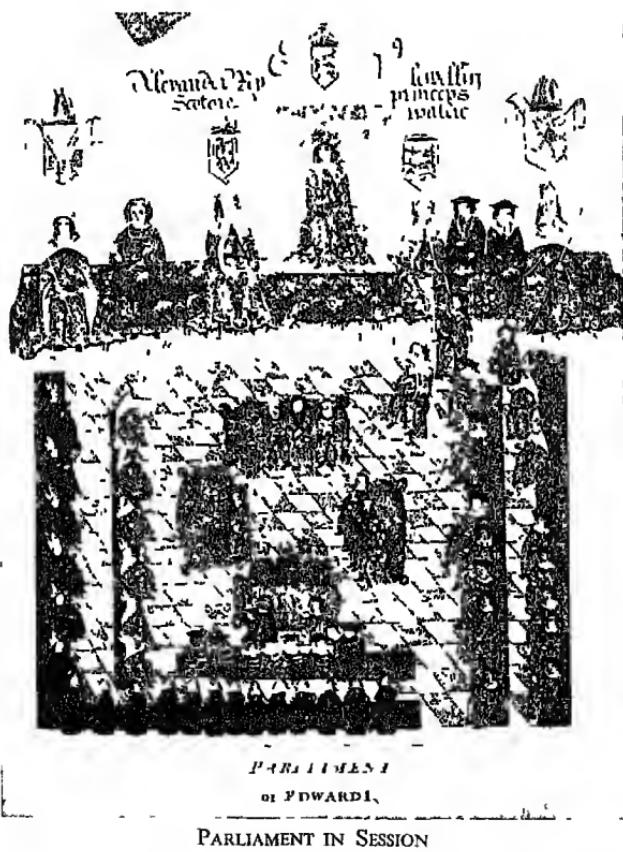
to it by a writ. The sheriff of their shire was to let the less important barons know of the meeting of the Council. These lesser barons, who did not want the expense of journeys to the Council, and who had less interest in its business than the greater ones, seldom troubled to attend. So the Council, in time, consisted of great barons, great churchmen, and officials who transacted the King's business. But the churchmen came, not to represent the Church, but because they held land from the King.

The Great Council attended to many kinds of business, and much of its work had to do with local affairs. In attending to local affairs it had to deal with local communities, such as towns and shires, and it was not at all unusual for people from these communities to have business with the Council, and to come to the place where it was sitting. These people were chosen by the community they represented and came to the Council with suits and petitions from it. So when, at various times during Henry III's reign, knights were summoned from each shire to attend meetings of the Great Council, or Parliament, no one saw anything very remarkable in it. They were already quite used to choosing representatives to take petitions to Parliament, and other representatives, the juries of presentment, to meet the King's judges on circuit. This was the same thing on a larger scale, but it proved very important because it was the beginning of the change that made Parliament not only a feudal assembly, but a representative one also.

The rulers of the thirteenth century were not trying to make Parliament representative, but only to get their business done as easily and efficiently as possible. When Simon de Montfort called not only two knights from each shire, but two citizens from each city that favoured his cause, he was not aiming at making a new kind of Parliament, but only at obtaining more support for himself. Nevertheless, his Parliament (1265) proved very important, because Edward I, who learnt much from Earl Simon, imitated it in the Model Parliament of 1295, to which he summoned two knights from each shire and two citizens from each city.

In the Model Parliament, the important communities of the nation, *i.e.* the shires and larger towns, were represented. But this did not mean representation of the whole nation, for there was nothing like the popular vote of to-day. Knights of

the shire were chosen in the shire court, which only freemen might attend, so the unfree labourers had nothing to do with choosing them. And in many towns only the principal inhabitants helped to choose their representative. But the people of the thirteenth century did not mind that, for they were not interested in representative government; indeed, they thought



it a nuisance. They resented having to pay the expenses of those sent to Parliament, while the representatives chosen disliked having to leave their own affairs in order to attend to the business of the nation.

But Edward found the new system useful, and continued it, though by no means every Parliament after the Model Parliament

contained representatives of the Commons. The shire and town representatives had the local knowledge necessary to decide the amount of taxes to be raised from different parts of the country, and to help to decide and answer petitions sent to the Great Council. In the end, they themselves presented petitions to the King, and this was the origin of the "bills" by which Parliament initiates a new law. The coming and going of people from all parts of the country to Parliament helped to give a sense of nationality to England, and also the people began to learn more about polities and the work of government.

There was, at first, no separate House of Commons. Parliament met in a variety of ways, and sometimes the knights of the shire deliberated with the barons. In the end they began to sit with the representatives of towns, probably because both were there chiefly to give local information. But this arrangement was important, because the knights were of gentle blood, and if they had sat with the barons instead of as Commons, Parliament would have been divided by a class distinction. Instead it became divided into a representative House of Commons, and a non-representative House of Lords. The union of knights and citizens helped to weaken the barrier between the nobility and the middle class, and to prevent ill-feeling between them.

## JOHN AND HENRY III

Richard I

	<i>Events in England</i>	<i>Events Abroad</i>
1200	1200 John's divorce	Loss of French possessions 1202 Capture of Arthur 1204 French conquest of Normandy
JOHN, 1199-1216	1208 The Interdict 1209 Excommunication of John 1213 Submission to the Pope 1215 Magna Carta	Struggle with the Pope Struggle with barons
1210	1217 Battle of Lincoln of Lambeth	Ti 1214 Battle of Bouvines
1220		Government of De Burgh
1230	1232 Fall of De Burgh	
1240		Henry's personal rule foreign favourites and papal exactions
1250	1258 Mad Parliament and Provisions of Oxford	Attempts to recover Poitou Papal attempts to gain Sicily and the Empire for Henry's relations
HENRY III, 1216-1272		
1260	1264 Battle and Mise of Lewes 1265 De Montfort's Wars	The Barons' Wars
1270	1265 Parliament and Battle of Evesham	
	Edward I	

## CHAPTER XII

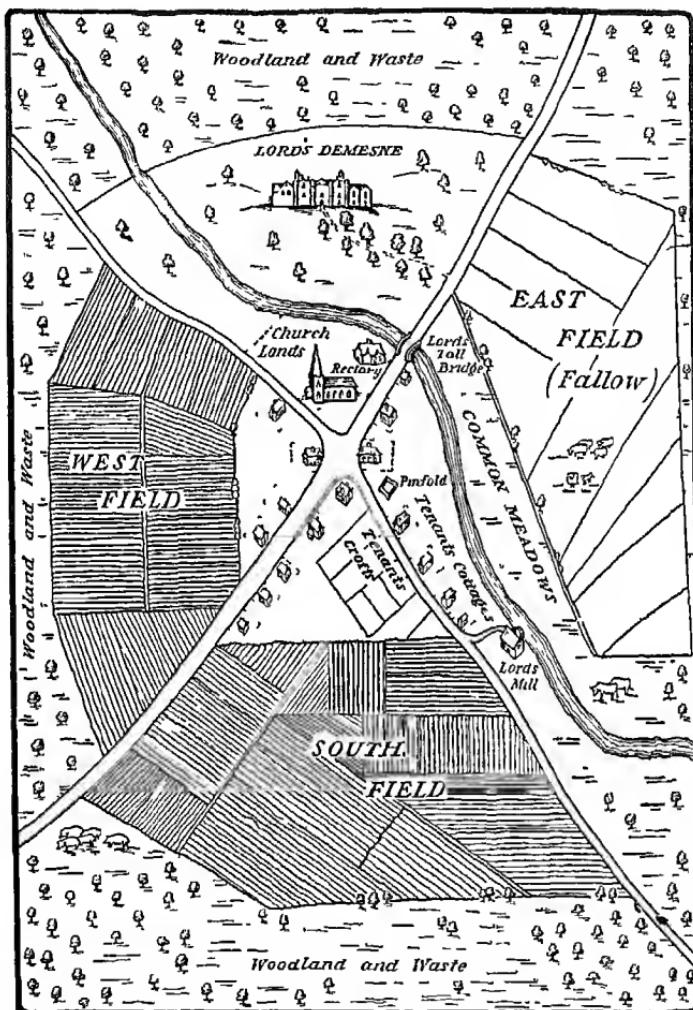
### LIFE IN NORMAN AND ANGEVIN ENGLAND

#### VILLAGE LIFE

Perhaps the first thing that would have struck a visitor to England during the reigns of the Norman and Angevin kings would have been the many languages and dialects spoken in the country. The upper classes spoke Norman-French, the language of the Norman conquerors. English was the tongue of the common people, and even those of English birth were often snobbish enough to adopt the speech of their betters. Wales and Cornwall still had their Celtic tongues. There was also a good deal of variation in the English spoken in different places. Danish words had crept in where the Danes had settled, and the people of one part of the country still had little to do with the people of other parts.

Most of England still consisted of isolated villages. Each of these, almost cut off from the rest of the world by bad roads, stretches of forest or marshes, still, as in Saxon times, produced its own food, clothes, and other necessaries. After the Conquest, as before it, the village had its hall, or manor-house, its church, its wooden cottages with small gardens, its three open-fields for growing corn, its meadows, pasture, and waste. It had its smith, swineherd, bee-keeper, and others who had special tasks allotted to them. Most of the inhabitants, however, worked in the fields, ate the food which the village produced, and wore clothes made of wool or linen, spun and woven by their women folk, or of leather, which they tanned for themselves.

There were fewer freemen in villages than before the Conquest, and the Normans called the bulk of the unfree labourers "villeins". The villein had a cottage and strips of land in the open fields, but he had to do two or three days' work a week for the lord of the manor, and could not sell any of his stock, or marry his daughters without his lord's consent. He could not leave his native village without the consent of his lord. The greater part of the population of medieval England



PLAN OF A MEDIEVAL VILLAGE

consisted of these villeins, who spent the whole of their life in one village, and knew nothing of the world outside it

The lord of the manor did not often live in the village, though he would visit it. The same man often held many manors, and moved about from one to another of them, while his steward and bailiffs managed them for him. At first the feudal lords

were soldiers, and in the warlike times of Stephen's reign they built castles, and often plundered the country around. But Henry II forced them to pull their castles down, and after his time manor-houses were usually stone buildings that could be defended, but were not really intended for war. The lords, too, grew less warlike, as kings sometimes took scutage in place of feudal service. They still did a great deal of mock fighting in tournaments, but they were slowly turning from soldiers into country gentlemen, though many of them served the King in war for payment.

This more peaceful state of affairs did not exist all over the country. The Marches, on the borders of Wales and Scotland, were the scene of constant raids and fighting, and the Lords Marcher remained a very warlike, and disturbing element. Occasionally, too, great barons in other parts of the country indulged in private wars with each other, so, in spite of strong government, England was still a long way removed from order and peace.

#### MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER

The King played a much more personal part in government than he does in modern times. His court was the centre of the administration, and for a long time the great officers of state followed him about the country. Kings and their courts led a wandering life, first visiting one place and then another. They travelled constantly, taking their baggage about with them and lodging where they could. Kings like William I and Henry II were energetic, hard-working men who had little time to spare for luxury and pleasure. They had to be soldiers, statesmen, lawyers, and many other things to cope with the tasks that faced them. They certainly needed to be men of action. Whenever the King was weak, inefficient, or idle, the country fell into disorder.

The great barons ruled their estates very much as the King ruled his kingdom, and the villeins had little to do with any authority higher than that of their lord. In most of the country royal authority appeared only at intervals, in the person of the King's justices, or the sheriff. The sheriffs were important officials. They held the shire courts which did the administrative and judicial work of the counties. They also collected and paid out a great deal of the King's revenue, appearing at the

Exchequer Court twice a year to have their accounts inspected and to pay in their money. Some barons had special privileges, and the King's officials had little or nothing to do with their estates, which were known as "liberties."

The arrangements for keeping order had altered little since Saxon times. The old system of dividing people into groups of ten, so that the group could be held responsible for the behaviour of its members, still continued. Moreover a lord remained responsible for his vassals. This in the end led to disorder, for, besides punishing his followers for misdeeds, their lord also gave them protection against others. In practice, this often meant that people could not obtain redress for injuries done to them by a follower of some powerful baron. There was a great deal of disorder, robbery, and violence in the country, even under the strong government of the best kings.

One thing that helped to cause disorder was that most people went about armed, even if only for their own protection, and it was expected that all men should know something about fighting. All freemen had to serve in the local "fyrd," or militia, a Saxon institution which the Norman kings had retained. They had to possess weapons suited to their rank, and this general use of weapons perhaps tended to increase the amount of bloodshed and violence in the country.

### CHARTERED TOWNS

The period of the Danish invasions and of the reconquest of the Danelaw by the Saxon kings of the tenth century had seen the establishment of many new towns in England. There were the Danish "Five Boroughs" of the east midlands, and the Saxon boroughs built as centres for defence by Alfred, Edward the Elder, and Ethelfleda. Other towns had grown up at road centres and bridges, near to great monasteries, and elsewhere, in places where people congregated for trade or defence. London was the greatest English town before and after the Conquest. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries town organisation in England began to make great strides forward.

It is difficult for town life and trade to develop unless the townspeople are free to manage their own affairs, and protect themselves from interference and oppression. These privileges the townspeople of the middle ages set themselves to secure

Kings were often in need of money for war, or for the ordinary expenses of government, and the merchants who lived in the towns were usually rich, and it became customary for a town to



WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR GRANTING A CHARTER TO THE CITIZENS OF  
LONDON, AD 1066

From the painting by J Seymour Lucas, R A, in the Royal Exchange,  
London By permission of the Gresham Committee

pay the king a sum of money in return for a charter. In this he granted them the right to have a governing body or corporation of their own. Richard I's eagerness to obtain money for his Crusade gave many towns the opportunity to buy a charter.

These chartered towns were known as "boroughs." As in modern times they were governed by a mayor, aldermen, and a council. They had their own borough court to try offenders, and, in the days of Simon de Montfort and Edward I they had become sufficiently important to be represented in Parliament. But a medieval town was very different from a modern one. It was smaller, more picturesque, and much dirtier. The houses, even in London, were mostly built of wood, the streets were narrow, and the shops were open booths, in front of which stood apprentices who cried their master's wares. Everything was cramped, for the town was usually surrounded by a wall for defence, and though people were driven to build houses outside the wall, as much use as possible was made of the space within. There were usually at least one or two churches, for the men of Norman and Angevin times were great church-builders. Sometimes a castle, which belonged either to the King or to a great baron, rose above the town and seemed to dominate it.

### THE GILDS, MARKETS, AND FAIRS

Since the townspeople had had to pay dearly for their privileges, they were unwilling to share them with others, and would not readily permit strangers to sell goods within their walls. Merchants had generally to be townspeople, and they were united in an organisation known as the "gild merchant," which controlled all the trade of the town.

Men of all trades belonged to the "gild merchant," but later, in most towns, many trades had a separate gild of their own. This was called a "craft gild" because all its members worked at the same craft and sold the same kind of goods. This was possible because, in the middle ages craftsmen themselves sold the things that they made. The craft gild included masters, journeymen, and apprentices. It had officials to carry out its regulations, and these inspected the work of its members to see that it was satisfactory, and fixed the price to be charged for it. The same price had to be charged for goods by all members of the gild, because medieval people did not believe in competition. They held that a man should receive a fair price for his work, and should attract custom by the excellence of his craftsmanship, not by undercutting his neighbour. The shops of members of a gild were placed near to each other for

convenience. The gild looked after its members when they were ill, and cared for their widows and children if they died. Many gilds also built churches for their own use.

Most of the trade with country people was carried on at markets and fairs. To these villagers brought what they had to sell, and bought at them the few things they did not produce for themselves. After the Crusades the amount of foreign trade increased, but it met with difficulties. A merchant trading abroad was often punished for the debts, or misdeeds, of his



ANGLO-NORMAN LADIES SPINNING

fellow townsmen. Wars and the quarrels of princes and great lords hampered foreign trade, and even trade between towns in the same country suffered from bad and unsafe roads, tolls and local restrictions, and many other checks upon its freedom.

### THE JEWS

One of the strangest things in the England of this period was the position of the Jews. In Norman and Angevin times the practice of charging interest on loans was considered sinful by

the Christian Church, so money lending was practised only by Jews. The Christians hated the Jews and forced them to wear a special dress. In medieval England, where every man had his appointed place, they would have been outcasts if the King had not taken them under his protection. The Jews were regarded as royal property so, though in outbursts of lawlessness they were often murdered or ill-treated, they were safe as a rule. But all their property belonged to the King, and a special department of the Exchequer kept an account of the money they lent to people. The King took as much of their wealth as he pleased, so they paid dearly for his protection. But in the second part of the thirteenth century Christians, usually Italians, were beginning to lend money, so the Jews had become less useful, and Edward I banished them from England altogether. They did not return until Cromwell's time.

### THE CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS

The Church was closely connected with the life of the common people. Village churches were still meeting-houses for the villagers, and the priests must have had a great deal of influence. But, unfortunately parish priests were poorly paid, and often uneducated. The clever ones, too, often neglected their parish for paid work in towns, for there was nothing unusual in people holding positions in the Church for which they drew wages while neglecting the work.

So parish work among the poor was often neglected or ill done, though the Church, through the great monasteries, provided poor relief and a certain amount of care for the sick. The Normans founded monasteries and built churches, but the monasteries were always inclined, when they became rich and well-established, to forget their strict rule, and to live easily and pleasantly. After the Conquest the English monasteries were reformed in accordance with Cluniac ideas. But the Cluniac reforms did not satisfy everyone, and new orders of monks were founded later, the most important of which to England was that of the Cistercians. The Cistercian order was founded in the twelfth century. Its ideal was a very strict life and great poverty. Wild and lonely places were chosen for its houses. In England many Cistercian monasteries were established in the Yorkshire dales, in country that had been laid waste when William I harried

the north These monasteries, such as Rievaulx and Fountains, had much land and took to sheep-farming. They became wealthy and important, and the wool produced by monastic houses helped to make medieval England an important wool-exporting country

But monks stayed for most of their time in their monasteries and, in theory at least, had little to do with the world outside. Much more important in the life of the ordinary people were the friars, who first appeared in England in the reign of Henry III. Friars, like monks, belonged to an order and to a special house, in which their lives were governed by rules similar to those of a monastery. But they were not cut off from the world like monks. Their work was to go out among the poor, preaching and giving help. There were two orders of friars—Franciscans, founded by St. Francis of Assisi, and Dominicans, founded by St. Dominic. The Dominicans, from the first, were learned teachers and preachers, but the Franciscans despised learning, till they found it necessary for their work of nursing and teaching the poor. The friars were vowed to poverty, and were supposed to depend on charity for food, but soon, like the monks, they became wealthy. They did good work and were popular, though when they became rich and worldly they sought out the rich rather than the poor, and became as greedy for wealth and position as many other churchmen.

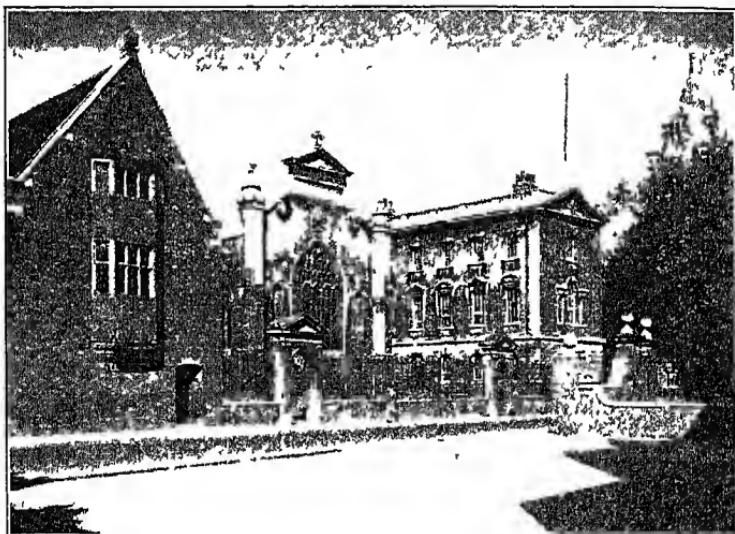
### REVIVAL OF LEARNING

Under the Norman and Angevin kings England was scarcely enough of a nation to have a language and literature of its own. Latin was still the language of learning, and was used by writers of serious books. The stories and poetry with which the French-speaking upper classes amused themselves were those of France. So this is not an important period in English literature, which came to life again in the fourteenth century, when the wealthy and cultured no longer despised the English language.

In the twelfth century a revival of learning took place. The Crusades had brought Christendom into touch with the Eastern Empire of Constantinople, and with the learning of the Arabs. The Arabs were students of philosophy, mathematics, and medicine, and the study of these subjects revived in Europe. The writings of Greek philosophers, and especially of Aristotle,

became known once more, though in faulty and imperfect translations Roman law and the ecclesiastical law of the Church (canon law) were taught, especially in Italy. Altogether, there was a great awakening of European interest in the wisdom of the past, and much thought and ingenuity was spent in making it fit into the teachings of the Christian Church.

The learning of this age was different from modern learning, because it was understood that the teaching of the Church must be the basis of all knowledge, so medieval thought was generally



*J. Dixon-Sloane*

PETERHOUSE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

The first College to be founded in the University of Cambridge

guided by religious rules. But there was a genuine desire for knowledge, and though much time was given to arguments and discussions which do not seem very important now, men were beginning to use their brains subtly and accurately, and paving the way for an advance to freer and clearer thinking. The general interest in learning was leading students to gather for study in places known as universities.

English students had been forced to go abroad if they wished to study at a university, but under the Angevin kings the English universities of Oxford and Cambridge were established. They

developed rapidly in importance, so it became possible for Englishmen to receive all their education in their own country.

University life at this period differed much from that of modern times. Students went to the university as boys of thirteen or fourteen, and usually remained there for several years. Most of them were poor, and had to live as best they could. Their life was a careless and undisciplined one, for there were at first no colleges. Even lectures were often very disorderly. Towards the end of the thirteenth century the foundation of colleges began, and made a great improvement, for crowds of young students, living how and where they pleased, easily fell into evil ways, and the life of a medieval scholar was often a disreputable one.

Scholars, who were known as "clerks," belonged to the Church, though they were only in minor orders and were free to marry. Their lives were varied for, while some finally rose to great positions as churchmen or as state officials, others had a wandering and poverty-stricken existence to the end. But the Church and the universities did give poor men's sons a chance to make a career for themselves, and many prelates of the middle ages had originally been no more than poor clerks.

The friars played an important part in the history of the universities, for many of them became teachers and lecturers, and the two orders became famous for their learning.

## CHAPTER XIII

### EDWARD I AND EDWARD II

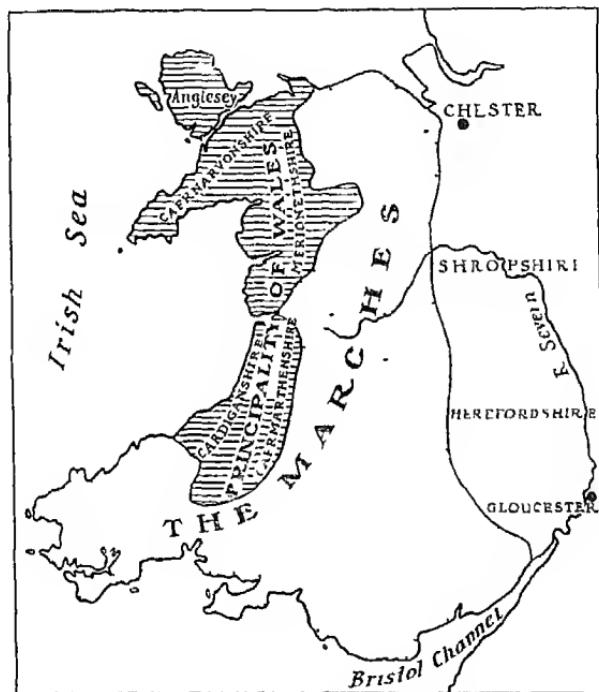
#### CONQUEST OF WALES

When his father, Henry III, died Edward I was away from England, leading one of the last Crusades. He was proclaimed king in his absence and the government went on in an orderly fashion till his return. This shows that England was now better organised and more stable than in the days when the death of a king led to outbreaks of disorder, and the heir to the throne had to hasten to seize his inheritance before someone else could cheat him out of it.

Edward I was a handsome, vigorous man, so tall that he was nicknamed "Longshanks." He was experienced in war and politics, for he had played an important part in the Barons' Wars and, as Earl of Chester, had helped to rule the northern Marches of Wales. He was clever enough to learn from other people, and many of his tactics, both in war and peace, were imitated from those of the able de Montfort. He had a natural liking for order and good government, and was one of the best of the English kings. But, when extending his authority, and trying to bring every one and everything under the same efficient system, he was apt to forget that people had their own loyalties and prejudices, and might bitterly resent measures designed for their good. This narrowness of outlook caused him a great deal of trouble with Wales, Scotland, and the English barons.

It was in Edward's reign that the English completed the conquest of Wales. The Welsh people were descendants of the Britons, who had been driven into the mountainous west at the time of the English settlement. For hundreds of years, they had managed to remain independent, and kept their Celtic speech, customs, and tribal organisation. But their enemies had been gradually conquering their country. The Norman kings found it impossible to conquer Wales, and had merely received homage from Welsh princes, but they gave permission to the Norman barons on the Welsh border to hold any land that they could

take from the Welsh. Each of these barons, known as the "Lords Marcher," made war on his own account and, by the time that Edward I came to the throne, only Anglesey, the mountainous region round Snowdon, known as Gwynedd, and some isolated districts in south Wales remained independent.



WALES AND THE MARCHES OF EDWARD I

-  Principality of Wales The lands conquered from Llewelyn by Edward I
-  The Marches Land conquered from the Welsh by Lords Marcher

Wales and the barons of the Marches were a source of constant trouble to the English kings. The Marchers had conquered large baronies for themselves and were warlike, powerful, and resentful of royal interference. They had lived so long among the Welsh that, though they often fought with them they were equally ready to take them as allies against the King.

During the thirteenth century there had been a revival of Welsh power under the Princes of Gwynedd, one of whom had helped the English barons, led by the Marchers, Bohun and Bigod, to secure Magna Carta. These Princes of Gwynedd united all independent Wales under their authority. In the Barons' War, in which the Lords Marcher played an important part, the Welsh again supported the barons. Edward I's experience in the Barons' War taught him to fear any alliance between his barons and the Welsh, so when Llewelyn of Wales first refused to do homage to him, and then announced his intention of marrying Eleanor, daughter of Simon de Montfort, Edward decided that Wales must be forced to submit to his authority.

Edward's first Welsh war (1277) was decided fairly quickly. The Welsh were disunited, for Llewelyn's brother, David, had quarrelled with him, and supported the English. The Lords Marcher overran the independent districts of south Wales, and Llewelyn was shut up in the mountainous Snowdon region. As this Snowdon district was almost unconquerable, Edward marched along the north coast of Wales, blockaded the mountain passes, and, cutting them off from the corn-supplies of Anglesey, starved the Welsh out. Llewelyn submitted and did homage. Edward gave him easy terms, but annexed the conquered parts of south Wales.

Llewelyn was not content for long to remain a loyal vassal to Edward. The Welsh of the annexed districts were angered by the attempt to rule them by English methods and English law. David of Wales, who had supported the English, was restless and treacherous, and, in 1282, persuaded his brother, Llewelyn, to rebel. The rebellion proved a serious one, and the English made little progress till Llewelyn was killed in a skirmish near the river Wye. David held out for a while, but in 1283 he was captured and executed. The death of their princes left the Welsh without a leader, so that Edward was able to complete his conquest easily.

By the Statute of Wales (1284) he annexed Llewelyn's principality, and divided his lands in north and south Wales into shires (Carnarvon, Anglesey, Merioneth, Flint, Caerdigan, and Carmarthen). In each shire royal authority was represented by a sheriff. Justices were to go on circuit as in England, to administer English law, and the Welsh were permitted to keep only those of their customs that did not conflict with it. To



P. B. Avery

PRINCE LLEWELYN'S MONUMFNT, CEFN-Y-BEDD

please Welsh national feeling Edward created his son, Edward, who had been born at Caerleon, Prince of Wales. To make his conquest secure he built and garrisoned a large number of castles in Wales.

### THE LEGISLATION OF EDWARD I

Edward I was a very practical man. Just as his share in the development of Parliament was due to his appreciation of the usefulness of representation of towns and shires, so the laws that he made were intended to settle troublesome questions of the day. As the King still had more to do with the making of laws than any one else, he was able to carry out important changes. Among Edward's most famous statutes were the Statute of Mortmain (1279), the Statute "De Donis Condition alibus" (1285), and the Statute "Quia Emptores" (1290). These deal with the holding of land, for, since most of the wealth of both King and barons came from feudal dues, the way in which land could be held, or sold, was matter of first-rate importance to them.

People often gave land to the monasteries, and in such cases, since a monastery neither died, married, nor could be a minor, the land's overlord lost the profit from his feudal rights of reliefs, marriage, and wardship. Such land was said to have passed into a "dead hand" (mortmain). In the interests of both himself and his barons, Edward forbade such gifts in his Statute of Mortmain, but people so often obtained permission to ignore this statute that gifts of land to the Church and monasteries continued to be frequent.

The Statute "De Donis" established the system (entail) by which landed estates, instead of being divided up on the death of the owner, passed to his eldest son. This made it easier for the King to obtain his feudal dues. The Statute "Quia Emptores" said that, if a vassal granted away part of his land, the new tenant was to hold it, not from him, but from his overlord. This was intended to prevent the splitting up of land into holdings too small to pay dues and services, and it did not apply to the King's own vassals, the great barons.

Besides regulating the holding of land, Edward tried to improve the existing arrangements for the defence of the kingdom, and for keeping order in it. For this the Statute of

Winchester (1285) was passed. Part of this statute was a re-enactment of the Assize of Arms issued by Henry II., and ordered every man to keep the arms suitable to his rank, so that he might be ready to defend his country. Another part of it ordered a watch to be kept in towns between sunrise and sunset, strangers to be examined, and criminals to be pursued (hue and cry) by the townspeople. The ground on either side of high-roads between towns was to be cleared, so that robbers could not hide there. Unpaid officers, whom we now call "Justices of the Peace," were appointed to enforce this act.

Edward also tried to limit the power of the barons by forcing them to provide proof of their right to the privileges that they claimed ("Quo Warranto" enquiry). He met with so much opposition from the powerful lords that he was forced to give up the attempt. He showed his interest in trade by instigating the Statute of Merchants (1285), which made arrangements for the collection of debts.

All this was the work of an efficient king, but there was one way in which Edward oppressed and misgoverned his people. His wars in England, Wales, France and Scotland were expensive, and to pay for them he raised heavy and unjust taxes. These fell on barons, Church, and merchants, and united them against the King. The barons, already made angry by the attempt to limit their privileges, had to pay excessive aids when the King needed money. The churchmen had tried to deny Edward's right to tax church revenues, but were forced to submit by threats of outlawry. The merchants found their export trade in wool—the most important export of medieval England—clipped by the high customs-dues levied upon it. Certain customs-dues had been granted to the King by Parliament, but Edward was not content with these, and sometimes seized all the wool at the ports and sold it for his own profit.

In 1297 the King was forced to agree to "Confirmatio Cartarum," a re-issue of Magna Carta, which contained a promise that no more excessive taxes should be levied on wool. This promise was exacted by barons and clergy, and it is interesting to note that their leaders were, once more, the Marchers, Bohun and Bigod. Probably they wanted to safeguard themselves from more heavy taxes, and to avenge themselves on the King for his attempt to limit their privileges and so curtail their power.

### ATTEMPTS TO CONQUER SCOTLAND

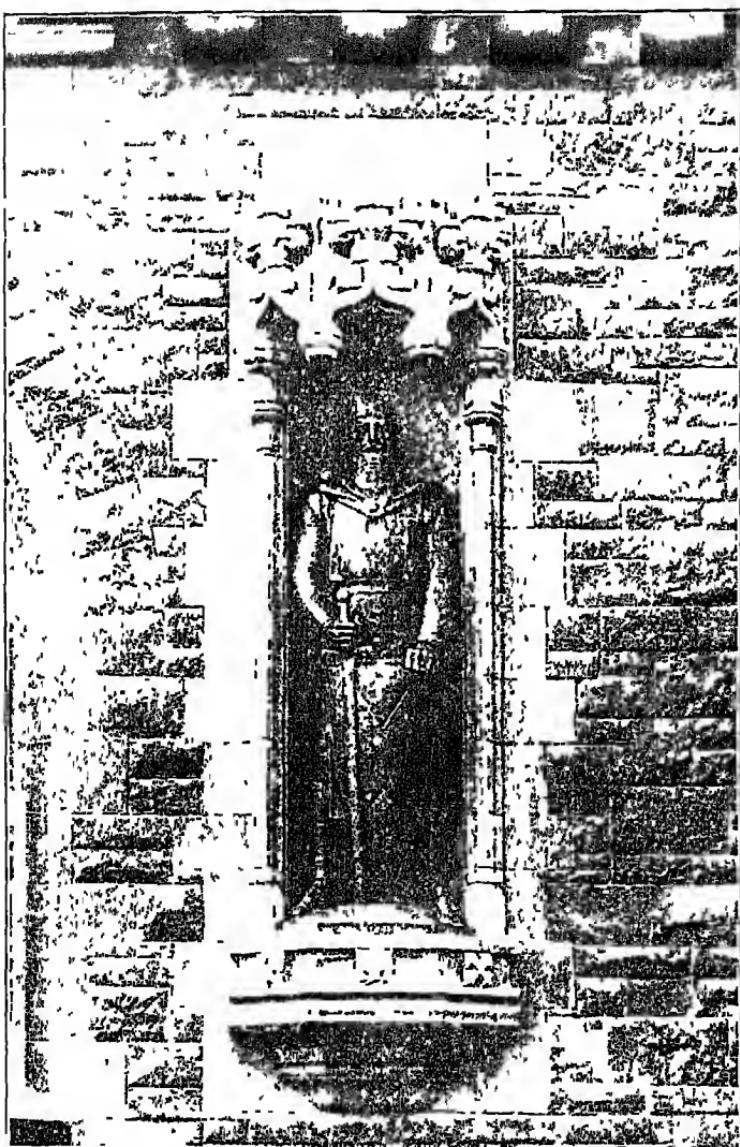
In 1286 Alexander III of Scotland died, leaving as heir to the Scottish throne, a little girl, Margaret, daughter of Eric of Norway. Edward I had conquered Wales, and now saw a chance of bringing Scotland under his rule, so he arranged a marriage between the little "Maid of Norway" and his own son. Unfortunately, Margaret died on her journey to England, and a dispute arose about the succession to the Scottish crown.

The English kings had already claimed the overlordship of Scotland. The Scots had acknowledged this overlordship in the Treaty of Falaise (1174), but Richard I, needing money for his Crusade, had given up his right to the Scottish homage in return for a sum of money. The English argued that he had no power to do this, and the question of the overlordship became a matter of dispute between the two countries. Nevertheless the claimants to the Scottish throne now solemnly recognised Edward's overlordship, and asked him to decide who ought to become King of Scotland.

Edward examined the case with great care. Two of the candidates, John Balliol and Robert Bruce, descended from nieces of William the Lion, King of Scotland, had a much better claim to the throne than any of the others. In the Award of Norham (1291) Edward decided in favour of Balliol, who was descended from the elder of the two nieces. Balliol then did homage to Edward for his kingdom, and the whole question appeared to have been settled.

But Edward, having made good his claim to the overlordship of Scotland, intended to assert his authority over that country and allowed Balliol's vassals to appeal to him against their king. Since Edward was quarrelling with the French King, because their sailors had been interfering with each other's trade, Balliol made an alliance with France (1295). Edward summoned him to England to answer for his behaviour, and, on his refusal to appear, war broke out.

Edward had little difficulty in overcoming Balliol's resistance. He captured Berwick, and defeated the Scots at Dunbar. Balliol gave up his kingdom and left the country, leaving Scotland in Edward's hands. Edward garrisoned many Scottish castles and left Warenne, Earl of Surrey, and Sir Hugh Cressingham to rule the country for him.



THE WALLACE MEMORIAL

*Francis Caird Inglis*

His conquest of Scotland had been easy, because there was no real national resistance to him. Many Scottish nobles were among his supporters, for many of them were descended from Norman adventurers who had settled in Scotland, and were more closely related in manners, outlook, and blood, to the Anglo-Norman nobles of England than to their own countrymen. So resistance to the English did not begin among the Scottish nobility, and, when Warenne and Cressingham ruled oppressively, it was a knight, William Wallace, and not a noble, who led the Scots against them.

Little is known about Wallace except that he had been outlawed for killing an official. He defeated Warenne at Cambuskenneth, near Stirling, and proclaimed himself "Guardian of Scotland." He then attacked and captured many Scottish castles. Edward was abroad, making war on the French King, but he returned, invaded Scotland, and defeated Wallace at Falkirk (1298).

The English King was unable to complete the re-conquest of Scotland. He had a French war on his hands, he was short of money and supplies, and his barons were unwilling to undertake a long Scottish campaign. So Scottish resistance continued till, in 1305, Wallace was captured and executed as a traitor.

Edward had now made peace with France and was free to deal with Scotland, but his task had become more difficult. The long resistance under Wallace had helped the growth of the Scottish national spirit, and embittered the feeling against English rule. A new leader came forward, Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick, the grandson of the Bruce who had claimed the Scottish throne. Bruce was a typical noble of Norman descent, and had fought for the English, and shown little interest in Scotland. But he inherited his grandfather's claim to the Scottish throne, and, in 1306, he murdered a rival claimant, the Red Comyn, and fled to the Highlands. The English defeated him easily, but he escaped, and in 1307 made another attempt to gain the Scottish throne. Edward died at Burgh-on-Sands as he led an army northwards to meet him. This was lucky for Bruce, whose followers were too few to have resisted the English successfully.

Edward I's son, Edward II, did not continue the campaign, and Bruce and his followers began to attack and capture the Lowland castles, one by one. They were so successful that, in 1313, only Stirling held out, and the indolent English King was



ROBERT THE BRUCE

forced to prepare for an invasion of Scotland. He had now to meet, not a rebel with a few followers, but a man who had the greater part of the kingdom in his hands. Edward was ill-supported by his own barons, and the most powerful of them, Thomas of Lancaster, refused to go to Scotland at all.

Edward had a much larger army than Bruce was able to bring into the field, but this advantage was counterbalanced by his mismanagement of the whole campaign. He was not prepared to give up any of his comforts or amusements, his army had so much baggage with it, that it was exhausted by its rapid march to meet Bruce. In the battle that took place at Bannockburn, near Stirling (1314), the English troops suffered from their King's bad generalship, for their archers were placed in the rear, so that many of their arrows fell among their own people. Bruce won a great victory, and Edward left Scotland, making no further attempt to reconquer it.

### EDWARD II AND THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD

Edward II was as unfortunate in the rest of his reign as in his dealings with Scotland. He was an indolent king, strong and active in person, and fond of sports and exercises, but unwilling to trouble himself over matters of State. He was, also, very obstinate, and insisted on neglecting the great barons and choosing his own friends and advisers. His chief favourite, a young Gascon, Piers Gaveston, had been banished by Edward I, but was recalled to England by Edward II, made Earl of Cornwall, and married to the King's niece. The barons were furious at the favour shown to him, especially as he made fun of them and gave them insulting nicknames. They forced Edward to banish him again, but he was soon recalled, and they united to destroy his power.

It may seem strange that Gaveston could arouse so much hostility, but the matter was not altogether a personal one. To some extent it was a continuation of the old struggle of king and barons to control each other, that had produced Magna Carta and the Barons' Wars. As the kings extended their power they had begun to govern the country less and less through the Council and the great officers of State, such as the Chancellor and Treasurer, and more and more through the officials of their own Household. The barons could influence the Council and the

great State officials, while the royal Household was composed of the King's own servants, on whom he could rely. Most of Edward I's heavy taxation had been raised through the Wardrobe, a department of the Royal Household which had actually developed from the place where the King kept his clothes and the servants who looked after them. Edward I's son, Edward II, had to deal with the situation left by his father's quarrels with his barons and his expensive wars.

At a Parliament in 1309 the barons and bishops insisted on appointing a committee to reform the government. In 1311 this committee, the "Lords Ordainers," issued Ordinances by which



EDWARD II (1284-1327)

Gaveston was once more to be banished, and the Wardrobe was no longer to manage English finances. The object of the Ordainers was simply to force the King to govern the country through the barons in accordance with their wishes, instead of through his favourites and the officials of his Household, who would do his will. Having made the Ordinances they thought that their work was done, but the King recalled Gaveston, and continued to make the Household officials his chief counsellors.

The result of this was that civil war broke out, and Gaveston was besieged in Scarborough Castle. He surrendered on a promise of safe-conduct, but Warwick, one of the leaders of the

barons, whom Gaveston had nicknamed "Black Dog of Aiden," kidnapped him and took him to Warwick Castle, near to which he was beheaded.

The murder of Gaveston shows the barons at their worst. How completely devoted they were to their own interests they proved by the reluctant support which they gave to Edward's Scottish war, which ended in the defeat of Bannockburn. The greatest of them, Thomas of Lancaster, who had been concerned in the execution of Gaveston, refused to go to Scotland at all. Thomas, who was the King's cousin, and Earl of Lancaster, Leicester, and Derby, was the most powerful man in the kingdom. But, in spite of his opposition to the King and his favourites, when the barons placed him at the head of a council to reform the government he did nothing.

Yet, among the barons there were a few who really wanted the government of the country to be improved. Since the Ordinances had limited the power of the Wardrobe, Edward was now ruling England through the officials of his Chamber, another department of the royal Household. The reformers managed to obtain the post of Chamberlain, the head of the Chamber, for one of their leaders, Hugh le Despenser. Since they could obtain little help from barons like Lancaster, Despenser and his friends joined the King's party. This was a great advantage to the King, for Lancaster had had the powerful support of the Lords Marcher, and since the Despensers were Marchers themselves, their alliance with the King weakened Lancaster's party.

For this reason the barons were very hostile to the Despensers, and forced Edward to banish them, but they returned and defeated Lancaster and his supporters at Boroughbridge in Yorkshire (1322). Lancaster was taken prisoner, tried, and executed at Pontefract. Then a Parliament, summoned to meet at York, repealed the Ordinances, and the defeat of the barons appeared complete.

The reformers forced the King to limit the power of his Household and to return to the old method of governing the country through the Council and the great State departments such as the Exchequer. But most of the bishops and barons were still hostile to the King and his party, and they soon found new leaders. The King had quarrelled with his Queen, Isabella, who was now absent in France. She had been joined there by a

Marcher Lord, Roger Mortimer, who had shared Lancaster's defeat, and was said to be her lover. In 1326 Isabella and Mortimer invaded England and captured Edward and the Despensers, who had fled to the Marches. They executed the Despensers, and summoned a Parliament, which accepted Edward's son, Edward III, as King in his father's place (1327). Edward II was said to have abdicated, but whether he ever consented to do so is doubtful. The victorious opposition was determined to get rid of him, and he was taken from castle to castle and ill-used, in the hope that he might die. Finally he was taken to Berkeley Castle, and murdered there.

EDWARD I AND EDWARD II

	<i>England</i>	<i>France, Wales, and Scotland</i>
1275	1272	
1279	Statute of Mortmain	1277 1st Conquest of Wales
1280		1282-3 2nd Conquest of Wales
1285	1285 { Statute of Winchester 2nd Statute of Westminster ( <i>De Donis Conditionalibus</i> )	1284 Statute of Wales
		"Quo Warranto" enquiry
1290	1290. 3rd Statute of Westminster ( <i>Quia Emptores</i> )	1286 Death of Alexander of Scotland
1295		1291 Award of Norham
1297	Confirmatio Cartarum	1295 Franco-Scottish Alliance
1300		1296 Battle of <i>Dunbar</i> (end of Balliol's rule)
1305		1297 Battle of <i>Cambus Kenneil</i> (English defeated by Wallace)
		1298 Battle of <i>Falkirk</i> (Edward defeated Wallace)
1307		1305 Capture of Wallace
1310	1311 The Ordinances 1312 Murder of Gaveston	1306 Bruce became leader of Scottish resistance
1315		
1320		1314 Battle of <i>Bannockburn</i> (Bruce defeated Edward II)
1322	1322 Battle of Boroughbridge (Defeat of Lancaster)	Capture of lowland castles by Bruce
1325		
1327		

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR—I

#### EDWARD BALLIOL AND SCOTLAND

When Edward II was deposed and murdered, his son, Edward III, was only fourteen years old, and Queen Isabella, together with Roger Mortimer, who was made Earl of March, ruled the country for him. Isabella and Mortimer soon lost the support that had made them able to overthrow Edward, for, in governing the country, their chief aim was to get as much as possible for themselves. They soon quarrelled with the barons, and the young Edward resented the way in which they kept all power in their own hands. In 1330, with the help of a party of his own friends, he overthrew them, and made himself King in reality and not in name alone, though he was still a youth of only eighteen. Mortimer was hanged, but Isabella, continued to be treated with respect as a Queen, though a careful watch was kept upon her, and she never regained any political power.

Edward III was strong, vigorous, and handsome, and his mind was set on cutting a figure in the world. He wanted to have the most magnificent court in Europe, to win glory in battle, and to conquer new provinces for himself. All this was very expensive, and, though for a time his successes dazzled his subjects, they grew weary of his extravagance, more especially as his conquests were soon lost again. He died thoroughly unpopular.

In Edward's reign began the long war with France known as the "Hundred Years' War," but it was in Scotland that he first interfered. Isabella and Mortimer had acknowledged Robert Bruce to be King of Scotland, and Scotland to be independent of English overlordship. But in 1332, with English help, Edward Balliol, John Balliol's son, defeated Bruce's son, David, in the Battle of Duplin Moor, and seized the Scottish throne. He was soon driven out of Scotland again, but, since he was willing to do homage to Edward for his kingdom, the English

took up his cause, and defeated the Scots in the Battle of Halidon Hill (1333). Balliol regained his crown, but he could keep it only by English help, and the outbreak of the war with France made it impossible for Edward to complete the establishment of his supremacy over Scotland. Bruce and the party of Scottish independence naturally became friendly with France, and so



EDWARD III (1312-77)

Edward's support of Balliol served only to widen the breach between the two countries

#### CAUSES OF WAR WITH FRANCE

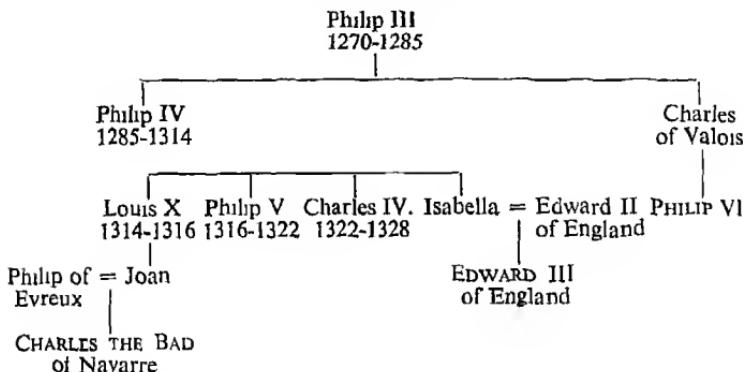
The situation between France and England was doubtful and unsettled. In the Treaty of Paris (1259) Henry III had given up his claim to the French provinces lost by John, and had been acknowledged as Duke of Guenne. But the French kings, like the English, were trying to extend their power and authority, and

Edward I had had to fight a French war in defence of Guienne (1297-1303). This was ended in the acknowledgment of his rights, and in the marriage of the French princess, Isabella, to his son, Edward II. Guienne itself showed no wish to pass under French rule. The Gascons of the southern part of the province regarded both French and English as foreigners, but the English King was further away from them than the French one, and interfered less with their independence. Also there existed a profitable wine trade between England and Gascony, which helped to bind the countries together. But the French continued their attacks on Guienne, and Edward III., in spite of his Scottish interests, was not the man to leave his duchy undefended.

Edward was also interested in the position of affairs in Flanders. England produced a great deal of wool, which was exported to Flanders to be manufactured into cloth, and this wool trade was of much value to both countries. The Flemish cities were wealthy and powerful, and resented any check to their independence. When they quarrelled with the Count of Flanders, their overlord, the French King came to the aid of the Count, who was his vassal. Jacob van Artevelde, the leader of the citizens of Ghent, which, with Bruges, was at the head of the revolt of the Flemish cities, decided to appeal to Edward III for help. He pointed out that the wool trade made the prosperity of the Flemish cities very important to England.

So the war with France was begun because of Edward III's ambition to win military glory and to conquer new provinces, because of French attacks on Guienne, and because the value of the wool trade with Flanders made England unwilling to see the Flemish cities fall under French control. Two years after the war had begun, Edward put forward a new reason for attempting to conquer France by claiming that he was the rightful heir to the French throne. This claim was made, in the first place, to please his Flemish allies. The Flemings were vassals of France, and could argue that, if Edward were, by right, the French King, they were not, in supporting his cause in the French war, fighting against their overlord. How far Edward's claim was justified it is difficult to decide, because modern rules of hereditary succession were, in the fourteenth century, only beginning to be established. Philip IV of France had left three sons and a daughter, Isabella, who married Edward II of England. His

sons, Louis X, Philip V, and Charles IV, reigned in turn and left only daughters to succeed them. The French lawyers came to accept a rule, known as the Salic law, which excluded women from the succession to the throne, so they chose as their king, Philip of Valois, a grandson of Philip III.



At first Edward III did not dispute Philip's claim, and even did homage to him. Later he argued that, if a woman could not rule France, she could transmit her right to the throne to her children, and claimed the French crown as heir to his mother, Isabella. This argument had some justification, but a similar one could have been used to justify the accession of Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, whose mother was the daughter of Louis X. And it was certain that the question would not be decided on legal grounds alone, but by Philip VI's ability to keep his throne, or Edward's to conquer it.

### THE ENGLISH ARMY

During the first part of the Hundred Years' War the English won the reputation of being the best soldiers in Europe, and this was chiefly due to their new methods of fighting. They had found a powerful weapon, the long-bow, and had learnt how to use it to the best advantage. Also they had discarded the old-fashioned feudal army of horsemen for a paid army, most of which fought on foot. These changes had been made and tested during the recent Welsh and Scottish wars, and they were a surprise to the French, who were still using old-fashioned methods of warfare and were slow to alter them.



British Museum

STORMING A FORT IN THE 14TH CENTURY

The English learnt the use of the long-bow from the archers of south Wales, who had fought for them against the northern Welsh in Edward I's reign. The long-bow was a much more powerful weapon than the short-bow because its greater length enabled the bowstring to be drawn further back. It was much less awkward and cumbersome than the cross-bow used on the Continent, which required a machine to bend it. The long-bow became the national weapon of England, and a rain of arrows from the archers on the flanks of the English army was used to throw the enemy into disorder as they advanced to the attack.

The old feudal army had had many defects as a fighting force. It was undisciplined. It served unwillingly and only for forty days. It was composed of heavily-armed, rather slow-moving horsemen. Its only method of fighting was by a heavy cavalry charge. Edward I began the practice of paying his subjects to fight for him, and Edward III continued it, so the English army of the Hundred Years' War consisted of paid soldiers, not of feudal levies. This led many men to take to fighting as a career which gave them a chance to grow rich by pay and plunder, and there arose a class of professional soldiers. The King did not hire or pay his own soldiers; his method was to make an agreement with barons, knights, or other leaders to serve him with so many men. Such leaders picked and paid their own followers, and this encouraged the barons to keep troops of retainers, whose business was fighting, and who caused disorder in times of peace. It led also to the formation of bands of professional soldiers, known as "Free Companies," who chose some able soldier for their leader, and fought for any one who would hire their services. Leaders of the "Free Companies" often became rich and famous, so many men who were poor, or of low rank, went to the French war to seek their fortune.

These paid soldiers were well-trained and disciplined, so the English were able to use tactics superior to those of the French, whose armies were still mainly feudal.

#### FIRST STAGE OF THE FRENCH WAR

The first years of the French war, which began in 1338, were uneventful. The English invaded northern France without much success, and their allies, the Flemish cities and the Holy Roman

Emperor, proved of little value to them. The only important victory that they gained was a naval one, the Battle of Sluys (1340). The French, expecting a new English invasion, had assembled a fleet at Sluys, at the mouth of the Scheldt, and the English attacked and fought them there. The French had the greater number of ships, for they had hired those of Spanish and Genoese sea-rovers to help them, but they lost their advantage by chaining their ships together. The English had ordinary merchant ships, collected from their ports, but in those days merchant ships were always armed and their crews were accustomed to fighting. The battle was very much like a land battle, for the English first attacked the enemy with a flight of arrows, then boarded their ships, and fought hand-to-hand on the decks. The victory had little result and the war dragged on as before. It was terribly expensive, and Edward had to borrow a great deal of money, and to tax his subjects heavily to pay for it. England grew discontented and, in spite of the King's ambition, the struggle might have come to an end had not so great a success been gained that English enthusiasm was once more aroused.

In 1340 Edward, accompanied by his eldest son, who afterwards became famous as the "Black Prince," landed at Baileux and marched through Normandy to Rouen, burning and plundering the farms and villages as he advanced. The French King was following him with an army larger than his own, so Edward marched up the Seine, as if he were about to attack Paris. Philip hastened to his capital to defend it, and the English, who wanted to reach Calais, crossed the Seine at Poissy, and advanced to the Somme. The French were once more at their heels, but, luckily, they discovered a ford, the Blanchetaque, by which the Somme could be crossed. They drew up their army on a low hill, near the village of Crécy to await the French attack.

At Crécy the English used the new tactics they had developed during the Welsh and Scottish wars, and which were a complete surprise to the French. Their army was in three divisions, each of which was drawn up in the same way, with dismounted knights and men-at-arms in the centre, and archers on either flank. As the feudal horsemen of the French army charged up the hill, the English archers, who were a little in advance of the men-at-arms, met them with a rain of arrows. The ground was soon

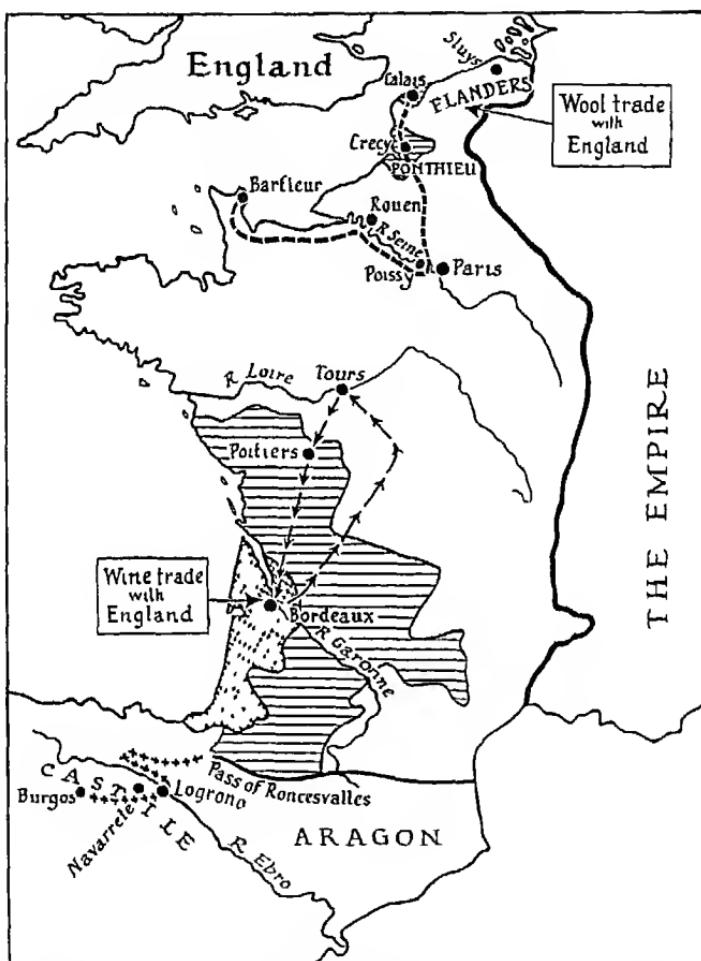
so cumbered with wounded horses and men that the advance of the French horsemen was checked. Though they charged fifteen times they only once reached the English lines, throwing into confusion the division of the army commanded by the Black Prince, a boy of sixteen. But Edward, whose division was held in reserve, sent help to his son, and the French were completely defeated. Many were captured and held to ransom, for the asking of ransom for prisoners was one of the ways in which medieval soldiers could make profit out of war. The victory of



THE BATTLE OF CRÉCY

Crécy gained for both Edward and England a great military reputation, though it had little other result. The capture of Calais (1347), after a long siege, was of more value to the English people, for Calais was a useful centre for the wool trade.

While Edward was absent in France during the Crécy campaign, the Scots, under David Bruce, who was allied with France, invaded the north of England, and were defeated in the Battle of Neville's Cross (1346). But England was not able to follow up her victories either in France or Scotland, for a terrible



MAP OF FRANCE TO ILLUSTRATE THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

- ||— Ceded to England by the Treaty of Bretigny, 1360
- · · · · Remained in English hands at the end of Richard II's reign
- March of Edward III in the Crecy Campaign, 1346
- → → March of the Black Prince in the Poitiers Campaign, 1356
- +++++ Line of march in the Spanish Campaign, 1367

plague, the Black Death, swept over Europe, and so many people died that the war came to a standstill for about eight years. Then, in 1355, the Black Prince took an army to Guienne (Aquitaine) and, landing at Bordeaux, raided the French countryside. In the next year he marched as far north as Tours, plundering and burning as he went. He had no plan of campaign beyond the barbarous one of doing as much damage as possible. But the French King, John, the son of Philip VI, who had died in 1350, got between the Prince's army and the English territory of Guienne. This forced the Prince to fight, though his army was much smaller than that of the French, and a great battle followed at Poitiers (1356).

In the Battle of Poitiers the English fought in the same formation as at Crécy, with men-at-arms on foot in the centre and archers on the flanks. Imitating the English, the French advanced on foot, but, as they had not learnt to combine archers with their foot soldiers, this made little difference. The battle was long, with much hand-to-hand fighting, and it ended in a great victory for England, and in the capture of the French King.

### THE BLACK PRINCE AND THE PEACE OF BRETAGNY

The Black Prince treated his prisoner with great courtesy, even waiting on him at table. Nevertheless, the capture of King John was used to extort very hard terms from the French. Peace negotiations went on for years, for France was now in such a state of disorder that nothing definite could be settled. In the end it was agreed, in the Treaty of Bretigny (1360), that Edward should abandon his claim to the French crown, but should receive Aquitaine (Guienne), Calais, and Ponthieu. A very heavy ransom was to be paid for the freedom of King John, but, though he was released, the payments were not made, so he returned to England and died there in 1364.

The Peace of Bretigny did not end the war, which had already continued for more than twenty years. Peace had been made, but the Free Companies of professional soldiers did not intend to be left without employment. Many of them united into one large body, the "White Company," led by a famous adventurer, Sir John Hawkwood, and left France for Italy, whose many small states were always fighting with each other. Some of the others refused to obey the King, and continued to fight and plunder.

the French on their own account. Moreover, the succession to the duchy of Brittany was disputed, and there English and French fought each other as supporters of the rival claimants. Still, in theory, France and England were at peace, though it was certain that the French King would try to recover the provinces given up to the English, and from the first there was



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EDWARD III MAKING A GRANT OF THE CONQUERED PROVINCES OF FRANCE TO HIS SON, THE BLACK PRINCE

a dispute as to whether the English King held them in full sovereignty, or as a vassal of France.

Edward III sent his son, the Black Prince, to rule Aquitaine. The Prince was a great soldier, and his victory at Poitiers had gained the admiration of Europe, but he had no interest in ruling his province. Like his father he was selfish and extravagant and cared for little except his own glory. To people of his own rank he showed the courtesy and generosity of a chivalrous

knight, but he had no sympathy for the common people of France, who were the chief sufferers through the war. He plundered them without mercy. Like the Free Companies he had no wish for peace. When Pedro the Cruel, of Castile, was driven from his throne by his half-brother, Henry, who was supported by France, the Black Prince readily led an army into Spain to restore him.

#### SPANISH EXPEDITION RENEWAL OF FRENCH WAR

The Spanish expedition was a mad adventure, undertaken in hope of glory and plunder. England had nothing to gain by it, and the Prince's wisest counsellors advised him not to leave Aquitaine, which the French were waiting to attack. In Spain the Prince won a great victory at Navarre (1367), and replaced Pedro on his throne. But after this the greater part of the English army died of disease in the hot Spanish summer, and soon after the remnant had returned to France, Pedro, who was hated by his subjects, was once more dethroned, and killed. The only important result of the expedition was that the heavy taxes levied to pay for it caused the people of Aquitaine to revolt and appeal to France for help. The war between France and England started again, and Edward III once more claimed the French crown.

In this new period of the war there were no battles, so there could be no great victories. The French, helped by the discontent of the people of Aquitaine, captured a town here and a castle there, advancing steadily into English territory. The Prince was infuriated, but could do little to check them, because he was faced by the disloyalty of his subjects whom he had angered by his heavy taxes. When the city of Limoges opened its gates to the French he determined to punish it in a way that would overawe the rest of Aquitaine. After recapturing the city, he massacred its inhabitants, men, women, and children. This shocking deed only increased hatred of the English, and when the Prince, ill of an incurable disease, returned to England, the English conquests in France were being rapidly lost.

In vain the English sent out a large army under the Prince's brother, the Duke of Lancaster. The French King, Charles V., had no desire for glory, but he was determined to recover the provinces conquered by England. In fighting he adopted the

tactics suggested by Bertrand du Guesclin, an able soldier from Brittany. The French commanders were ordered never to fight the English, but to retreat before them. When an English army landed in France, it was left to plunder the country at will, and, as the French would not fight, it was obliged in the end to return home without achieving anything. The French peasants suffered, as they had done throughout the war, but the French armies remained intact, and continued to take towns and castles when the English were elsewhere. In a few years England retained only Calais, Bordeaux, and a few castles, while the French were beginning to raid and burn towns on the English coast.

The war had caused terrible suffering to the French peasants, whose crops and villages had been burnt by the invading armies. In fighting each other, French and English had learnt to be more conscious of the difference in nationality between them, and had learnt to hate one another. Nothing had been gained, yet many of the English were eager to continue the war, because they had come to regard the plundering of France as an easy way of making a fortune. All classes felt the same about this, for the importance of the English archer in battle gave ordinary people, as well as those of gentle blood, a chance of becoming professional soldiers. The English victories had had little lasting result, but the memory of them was an incentive to further wars with France, and in the early years of the fifteenth century the Hundred Years' War was destined to begin again, and to pass through another succession of victories and defeats.

## CHAPTER XV

### ENGLAND IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

#### COMMUTATION THE BLACK DEATH

For a long time a great part of the population of England was unfree. Villeins could not leave the manor on which they had been born, and had to work for their lord in return for the land that they held from him. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries these villeins became free labourers, who paid a money rent for their land, and received wages for the work that they did.

This important change took place gradually. Money was coming into general use, instead of payments in kind or by service. Lords of manors began to hire labourers for wages, and found that these labourers worked harder and more efficiently than the unwilling villeins. So many of them agreed to let their villeins pay rent instead of doing service, and hired labourers with the rent they received. This acceptance of rent instead of service was called "commutation".

In the middle of the fourteenth century the spread of commutation was interrupted by the plague known as the "Black Death". This plague first broke out in China, and was brought to Europe by traders. It reached England in 1348, and lasted for more than a year, killing over a third of the population. This made labour scarce. Lords of manors often found themselves without sufficient men to till their fields, so crops were lost, and many landowners were ruined. Because labour was scarce, labourers could obtain high wages. The rents that lords had agreed to accept instead of service from their villeins were not sufficient to pay these high wages. So service became much more valuable than rent, and the lords were unwilling to commute any more services.

### STATUTES OF LABOURERS

The landowners felt that they were being ruined by high wages and the scarcity of labour. Many of them could not



HARROWING THE OPEN FIELD OF A MEDIEVAL MANOR,  
FOURTEENTH CENTURY

From a *Book of Hours* made in Flanders

afford to pay labourers to cultivate their land, so an attempt was made to force the labourers to accept lower wages. In 1351, Parliament passed a "Statute of Labourers," which forbade

the payment of wages higher than those usual before the plague. This statute—the first of a series—also tried to fix prices.

But the attempt to regulate wages was disregarded. Labourers continued to accept as much money as they could get, while landowners preferred to pay high wages rather than to leave their fields uncultivated. So the heavy penalties incurred by those who disobeyed the act—imprisonment, outlawry, and branding—were not sufficient to frighten men into obedience. They did, however, make the labourers angry and discontented.

The unfree villeins, tied to one manor and forced to work for their lord, were jealous of the high wages that the free labourers continued to receive. They were eager to obtain their freedom, but lords who had not already commuted the services of their villeins for rent refused to do so now that labour was scarce. So many villeins obtained freedom by running away from the manor to which they belonged. Others became discontented and began to question their lord's right to their services. Preachers, of whom the most famous was John Ball, a Kentish priest, went about the country preaching communism and equality, and inciting the workers to rebel.

Workers in towns were as discontented as those in the country. They complained that their gilds had fallen under the control of rich citizens, who guarded their own privileges and did not give their workmen a chance to rise in the world. The French war added to the general discontent. After the Treaty of Bretigny the English continually lost ground, and the English people, unwilling to lose the plunder of France, which they had come to regard as their right, blamed the government.

#### THE PEASANTS' REVOLT ENCLOSURES

For a long time all this unrest had no definite result. Then, after Edward III's death, when the little Richard II had become king, the government foolishly levied a tax on each individual (Poll-tax), and this pressed very heavily upon the poor. Quarrels between the people and the tax-gatherers led to a revolt, which spread rapidly through the eastern and home counties, while rioting also occurred in Yorkshire and Somerset.

The Peasants' Revolt (1381) was quite well organised, and had some good leaders, such as Wat Tyler and Geoffrey Litster.

The rebels showed their hatred of serfdom by attacking manors, making the lords grant charters to their villeins, and destroying the manorial court rolls, on which were recorded the



REAPING IN THE OPEN FIELDS, FOURTEENTH CENTURY

From a *Book of Hours* made in Flanders

services that the villeins had to pay. They also murdered many lawyers, for the law had usually been interpreted in the lords' favour. Marching on London, they showed their hatred of the government by destroying the palace of the King's uncle, the

Duke of Lancaster, and by murdering the Chancellor and Treasurer. But they were, on the whole, reasonable, and when the young King met them and promised them full pardons and the fulfilment of their demands, they dispersed, and the rebellion was over. Parliament, however, would not carry out the King's promises. The rebels were punished, and no alteration was made in the position of the workers. But, as labour became less scarce, the lords were once more willing to accept rent instead of services, and by the end of the fifteenth century serfdom had almost disappeared from England.

In this way English life changed a great deal. Labourers were no longer forced to stay in one place, but could move about the country. Many lords ceased to live on their manors, but



KING'S SEALS FOR LABOURERS' PASSES (FOR SERFS)

These were used under the Statute of Cambridge, 1388, which forbade the serfs to leave their districts.

merely drew rents from them, living where they pleased. The villeins had become small farmers, who held their land by copy-hold or leasehold.

Most of the cultivated land was still worked in great open fields divided into strips, but new methods of farming were appearing. Landowners often enclosed their own demesne land and let it as a separate farm. Sometimes, too, they enclosed part of the common pasture and waste, which was disadvantageous to their tenants, who had rights there. The scarcity of labour made many lords enclose land for sheep farming, which required few men. Since there was a great demand for wool, this practice spread, leading, in the latter part of the fifteenth century, to unemployment and continuing to be a source of trouble in Tudor times.

### DECLINE OF THE GILDS

While the country labourers were gradually becoming free men, the position of workers in towns was becoming worse. Craftsmen were forced to belong to the gilds, which controlled the trade of their town, and these gilds had, for a long time, proved very useful institutions. They trained the workers, saw that work produced was of a good standard and that prices were fair, and looked after sick members, their wives, and their children. There had been no sharp class distinction between master and workman, for both belonged to the gild, and a man could become in turn apprentice, workman and master.

But during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries merchants were growing wealthy and no longer felt that they belonged to the same class as their workmen. They made it difficult for workmen to become masters. They also made it difficult for outsiders to become members of the gild at all, for they put the cost of entry very high and would take few apprentices. In this way the gilds became less useful. Most of them were transformed into organisations by which a few men could keep trade in their own hands and so increase their wealth. The workers were discontented, but attempts to strike were repressed, as were the journeymen gilds the workmen formed to protect themselves. Many craftsmen left the chartered towns and went to live in villages where no gilds existed.

### WOOL AND CLOTH TRADES. THE CAPITALIST EMPLOYER

At the beginning of the fourteenth century England's most important trade was still the export of wool, and taxes upon exported wool formed an important part of the King's income. To gather these taxes more easily the King ordered all exported wool to be taken to one town to be sold, and this was called fixing the "staple" or market there. The staple was fixed at Calais after the capture of the town by Edward III, and Calais became the centre of the English export trade. Merchants who exported wool were known as "Merchants of the Staple," and were united under a mayor.

Edward III was not content that English wool should go abroad to be made into cloth, so he protected and encouraged

the manufacture of cloth in England. He brought craftsmen over from Flanders to teach the English their methods. The English cloth trade soon began to flourish, and by the fifteenth century England had become a cloth-manufacturing country. Instead of exporting wool it could use all the wool that its sheep-farms produced.

The development of the cloth manufacture sharpened the distinction between master and workman, which was already appearing in the towns. The manufacture of a piece of cloth involved many processes, such as spinning, carding, weaving, dyeing, and fulling. It was usual for one rich employer to buy the wool, and then pay the workers who carried out the various processes necessary to make it into cloth. In this way there appeared the capitalist, who was not a worker himself but invested his money in other men's labour, and then sold the result at a profit.

At one time it had been quite usual for a workman to become a master with other workers in his employ. It was much less usual for him to be able to find the money to become a capitalist employer, so workmen and masters came to belong to different orders of society. Moreover, the rich clothiers objected to guild restrictions, and established their industries in country places, giving out work to men who did it in their own homes. This is known as the "domestic system," and, as the worker had no organisation to protect him he was often underpaid.

### THE MERCHANT ADVENTURERS MERCANTILISM

The development of the cloth manufacture had important results on the English export trade. English merchants began to take their cloth to all parts of Europe to sell. These men were known as "Merchant Adventurers."

Since England now manufactured her own wool instead of exporting it, the Merchant Adventurers began to control the English export trade, while the Merchant Staplers, who dealt in raw wool, lost their trade and became of no importance. The Merchant Adventurers obtained a charter from Henry IV., and a monopoly of the trade in cloth. During the fifteenth century they formed companies to trade with different parts of Europe—the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Germany, and other countries.

In the Mediterranean they became the rivals of the merchants of Venice and Genoa, while in northern Europe their chief competitors were the merchants of the Hanseatic League. In those days merchant ships went armed and quarrels over the right to sell goods in a particular market frequently ended in fighting. Foreign merchants were hated in England, and the



MERCHANT WITH CART-LOAD OF MERCHANTISE  
From British Museum MS Reg 19c VIII, 1496

Londoners frequently attacked the London settlement of the Hanseatic merchants, known as the "Steelyard."

The Hundred Years' War against the French had led to the development of national feeling in England. Norman, and Saxon, and Dane had become one English nation, and the quarrels with alien merchants for foreign markets increased the feeling of nationalism. Englishmen regarded other nations as

their rivals, and thought that the way to become prosperous was to keep as much wealth and trade as possible in their own hands. They regarded the possession of gold as very important. So far as possible they forbade gold to be taken out of England, but some always had to go out, to pay for goods bought in other countries, so this prohibition was not very effective. They also, by the Navigation Act of 1381, forbade English merchants to import and export goods in any but English ships. The object of this was not only to improve English shipping, but to control the Channel, and to increase the strength and security of England. This policy of regarding trade from a purely national point of view, and using it as a means to strengthen the nation, was known as "Mercantilism."

### THE CHURCH'S OPPOSITION TO THE POPE

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries English respect for the Pope and the Church declined. Bishoprics, monasteries, and other ecclesiastical institutions held a large share of the land and wealth of the country, and seemed to laymen to do little in return for it. Churchmen were worldly, and people accused them of leading easy lives, trying to get rich, and neglecting the duties of their office. While the upper clergy were wealthy, the parish priests were poor, and their parishes were often neglected while they added to their income elsewhere. In Edward II's reign demands were already being made in Parliament that the wealth and lands of the Church should be taken away.

Parliament also took measures to limit the authority of the Pope. Until the end of Henry III's reign papal authority in England had steadily increased. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, not only laymen, but many churchmen also, became hostile to papal interference in English affairs and papal demands for money from the English Church. One reason for this was that during most of the fourteenth century the Popes were absent from Rome and lived in Avignon, on the French border. This meant that they were under French influence, so during the Hundred Years' War, the English regarded them as allies of the enemy. When the Popes returned to Rome the French set up a rival Pope at Avignon. The result was the Great Schism, which lasted till 1417, and during which European countries had to choose between the claims of rival Popes. The prestige

of the Church and the Papacy was greatly weakened by this in England as well as abroad.

The English resented the payment of money by their Church to the Papacy, and papal tax-collectors were often ill-used. They also objected to the Pope's habit of granting positions in the English Church to foreigners, and in 1351 the Statute of Provisors was passed to check this. Soon afterwards the Statute of Praemunire (1353) forbade the taking of legal cases, which rightly belonged to the King's court, to Rome for settlement.

### JOHN WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLAARDS

In its attacks on the Pope and the wealth of the Church, Parliament found a useful advocate in John Wycliffe, a Yorkshireman. Wycliffe was educated at Oxford, and was for a time Master of Balliol. He then held livings in different parts of the country. Wycliffe boldly attacked the worldly life of Pope and clergy, and taught that, if they were unworthy of their offices they ought to be deprived of them. He argued that both in Church and State "lordship," or authority belonged only to good and upright men, and that the wicked had no right to it. This teaching justified attacks on the Church if it had ceased to do its duty, and, in consequence, Wycliffe had the support of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the leader of the anticlerical party in England, and of other important people.

Wycliffe did not remain content to attack the power and wealth of the Church, but began to criticise its religious teaching, and to uphold the right of laymen to judge religious matters for themselves. Lancaster at once abandoned his cause, though he continued to protect him from punishment when the Church denounced him as a heretic.

Wycliffe's followers, nicknamed "Lollards," continued to attack the Church's doctrines. They also produced a translation of the Bible into English, so that laymen could read it and form their own opinions on its teaching. But, as books were still few and copied by hand, and most people were still unable to read, the use of the Wycliffe Bible could not be widely spread.

During the Middle Ages the English Church had shown little inclination to persecute people for their religious opinions, and little was done to suppress the Lollards during the reign of Richard II. But Henry IV had obtained the English throne by the help



JOHN WYCLIFFE

of the Church, and, as Arundel, his Archbishop of Canterbury, was a fierce opponent of the Lollards, the King had to consent to their suppression. In 1401, the Statute "De Haeretico Comburendo" ordered that heretics who had been tried and condemned by the Church courts should be handed over to the King's officers to be burnt publicly. So began the first great English religious persecution. The burning of heretics continued under Henry V, who, unlike his father, was a religious bigot, and seems really to have approved of the burning of Lollards. In Henry VI's reign the persecution died down, because few Lollards remained, and these usually kept their opinions secret.

## LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND EDUCATION

The Hundred Years' War caused national feeling in England to develop quickly. After the Conquest the English nobles were a Norman-French speaking aristocracy, more nearly related in speech and manners to Frenchmen of gentle blood than to the common people of England, among whom they lived. But with John's loss of Normandy, they lost their foreign estates, and their possessions and interests began to be more exclusively English. Since they spent most of their lives in England, the French they spoke became unlike that spoken in France. By the time of the Hundred Years' War the French had almost as much difficulty in understanding them as if they were speaking a foreign language. At the same time it became usual for the nobility to speak English as well as French. During the fourteenth century, partly as a result of the hatred of the French people inspired by the Hundred Years' War, English gradually became the speech of the whole nation. But it was an English very different from that spoken before the Conquest, and included many words of French origin.

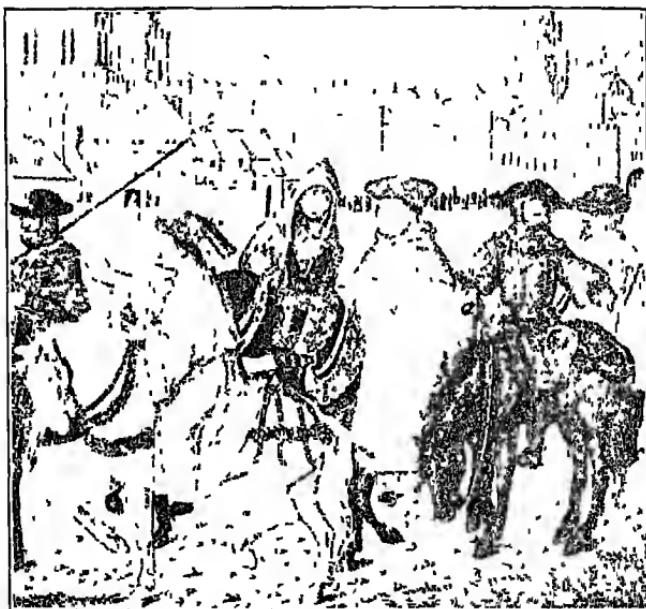
The fourteenth century was also an important period in the development of English literature. The chief writer of the day was Geoffrey Chaucer, the greatest of our poets before Shakespeare. Chaucer's work, in spite of differences in language, is very modern in spirit, and gives a clear and living picture of the people of his own day. He had a genius for describing them and their peculiarities in a rather sarcastic, but very vivid manner that makes it possible to see them as real people, and not only as literary sketches. His most famous work concerns a band of pilgrims, who were journeying to Canterbury, but he wrote a great deal of other poetry, and some prose. Chaucer was an educated and cultivated man, who was well-known at court, and had travelled abroad, especially in Italy. He was broad-minded, and had a detached, humorous attitude towards the world.

Another famous fourteenth century poet, William Langland, the author of a long allegory, "Piers Plowman," that describes and criticises the society of his day, was less polished than Chaucer, and more earnest. He seems to have belonged to the poorer classes, and to have felt their grievances deeply. Like

Chaucer, he was sarcastic, and he was very bitter in his attacks upon the Church.

Of the prose writers of the day Wycliffe and his followers were the most important. The Wycliffe translation of the Bible is noted for its prose as well as for its religious importance, and Wycliffe also wrote many pamphlets and sermons.

Another interesting fourteenth century writer produced the supposed "Travels" of Sir John Maundeville, which contain an account of the marvels Sir John saw on his journeys. These



*British Museum*

CANTERBURY PILGRIMS

"Travels" are now held to be entirely imaginary, and there is no reason to suppose that Maundeville ever existed, or that the writer ever left Europe. In the fourteenth century they were widely read, and are still interesting as an example of the legends of strange lands that could command belief when the greater part of the world was still unexplored.

Education flourished in the fourteenth century. Many schools were founded, as well as colleges at the universities. With the foundation, in Richard II's reign, of Winchester School

by William of Wykeham, and that of Eton, in the fifteenth century, by Henry VI., education began to pass out of the hands of the Church. But the fifteenth century was, on the whole, a period of decline. The country was disorderly, and exhausted by foreign and civil wars, and both education and literature suffered. Even the chronicles written at this time were poor and scanty, and, except in the private letters of the Paston family, we have none of those detailed pictures of the period that make the fourteenth century so real to us. The Middle Ages were drawing to a close, and it was not until a revival of thought and learning had taken place that, in the Tudor period, we encounter writers of the standard of the fourteenth century.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE GROWTH OF PARLIAMENT

#### PARTY STRUGGLES IN THE REIGN OF EDWARD III

The war with France in the reign of Edward III gave Parliament an opportunity to increase its power. Now that wars were fought by paid soldiers instead of by feudal levies, they were very expensive. To pay for his wars the King had to ask Parliament for grants of money and, in order to obtain them, he was obliged to pay attention to its wishes.

The Commons had a share in the granting of taxes, and played an important part in the politics of the time, but this does not mean that anything like popular government was being established. The knights of the shire and the burgesses from the towns were very much under the influence of the barons, and any baronial party that was able to secure control of the government could rely upon the support of the Commons. So the real struggle for power was still either between King and barons, or between different parties of barons. The Commons were little more than tools used by their betters in quarrels with each other.

When, during the first years of the French war, Edward III's ministers in England could not supply him with all the money he needed, he returned home (1340), and dismissed both his Chancellor, Robert Stratford, Bishop of Chichester, and the rest of the ministry. But Parliament already realised that the war had made the King dependent upon it, and bishops and barons united to force him to promise that he would choose only ministers of whom they approved, and would submit for their inspection an account of the money that he spent.

After this, Edward was too wise to risk any more struggles with Parliament, and the government was carried on efficiently by his ministers. Most of these were bishops, the most important being William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester and founder of Winchester College. Wykeham is a good example of the political bishop of the Middle Ages, who was more like a modern civil servant than a modern bishop, and who had

received his bishopric as a reward for serving the King. Wykelham was the son of poor parents, for, in the medieval Church, even the poorest had a chance to rise to a great position. He was an architect, who had built castles for the King, and then drifted into political life as his secretary, becoming one of the richest and most powerful men in England.

In the later years of the reign a party grew up at court which was jealous of the power of Wykeham and the other bishops, and aimed at overthrowing them and getting control of the government. The leader of this party was the King's son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the friend and protector of Wyeliffe. Laneaster was unpopular, but his father's support, and the general hostility to churchmen enabled him to get rid of the bishops and put his own party in power. For some time he was the real ruler of England, for Edward III., in his old age, cared for nothing except pleasure, and was completely under the influence of a worthless favourite, Alice Perrers.

Lancaster was accused of aiming at the throne, and blamed for the failure of the French war. The opposition party, which included the bishops, many nobles, and even his brother, the Black Prince, now an invalid, managed to gain control of the Parliament of 1376, known as the "Good Parliament," and to attack Lancaster and his friends. As soon as Parliament was dissolved, Lancaster returned to power, and continued to rule the country till his father's death (1377). The Good Parliament had, however, helped to pave the way for the peaceful accession of the son of the Black Prince, the little Richard II.

Edward III's successor, Richard II, was one of the most unfortunate of our kings. Though he had both the will and the capacity to be a good ruler, the quarrels of the great nobles, and their attempts to control the government filled his reign with disorder, and led in the end to his dethronement and early death.

He came to the throne when still a boy, so a council had to be appointed to govern the country for him. The surviving sons of Edward III were not made members of this council, because it was thought that they might be jealous of their nephew and try to get control of the kingdom. But the eldest

of these uncles of the King, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, was the most powerful man in England, for he held three earldoms as well as his duchy, and had land in every county. Though he was now excluded from the government his power and influence remained great.

Lancaster was very unpopular. His pride and hasty temper involved him in quarrels with other nobles, and his wise attempts to secure peace with France and Scotland angered those who



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RICHARD II WITH HIS FRIENDS AT CONWAY CASTLE

preferred war. The bishops, with whom he had quarrelled in Edward III.'s reign, had spread evil tales about him, and he was hated by the common people, who sacked and burnt his palace of the Savoy during the Peasants' Revolt (1381). A few years later he left England for Spain, where he carried on a private war in the attempt to obtain the crown of Castile, the rightful heir to which was his second wife, Constance.

Though he had been the object of general suspicion, Lancaster had remained loyal to his nephew. Now that he was

out of the way, his youngest brother, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, determined to get control of the government. England was being ruled by the King's friends. Of these Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, was an experienced statesman, though the nobles despised him because he was descended from a family of Hull merchants. Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was an extravagant young noble, who was a few years older than Richard, and his close personal friend.

Against the King's friends Gloucester obtained the support of Lancaster's son, Henry of Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby, of Thomas Mowbray, the young Earl of Nottingham, who had been one of the King's party, and of the Earls of Arundel and Warwick. These five nobles, after an unsuccessful attempt to get rid of Suffolk and reorganise the government attacked and defeated the King's supporters in the Battle of Radcot Bridge, near Oxford (1387). They next called together a Parliament of their own friends, before which they accused their enemies of treason. In the language of the day this was not to "accuse," but to "appeal" them of treason, so the five lords, Gloucester, Derby, Nottingham, Arundel, and Warwick, were known as the "Lords Appellant." Parliament condemned the accused, and is therefore known as the "Merciless Parliament," but Oxford and Suffolk escaped out of the country and died abroad, though some of their friends were executed.

#### THE KING'S RISE IN POWER AND OVERTHROW

The Appellants had the country under their control, but they did nothing of importance. Soon Richard, who was now of age, cleverly obtained sufficient support to be able to take the government into his own hands without any disturbance. His position was weak, so he determined to obtain the assistance of the Duke of Lancaster, the only man powerful enough to keep the country at peace. Lancaster's Castilian expedition had failed, and he was now recalled to England and became the King's firm ally and supporter. His return brought peace and order, for he had great influence over his brother, Gloucester, his son, Derby, and many of the barons. Richard did not attempt to avenge himself on his enemies, and for the next ten years England was both peaceful and well-governed,

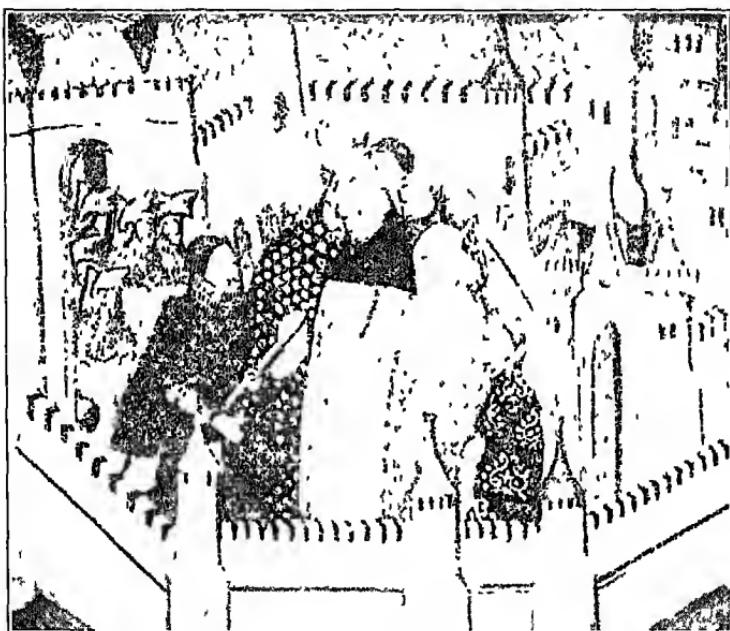
though some of the nobles protested against Richard's complete reliance upon Lancaster

Richard had very exalted ideas of royal authority, and it is probable that he himself resented his dependence on his uncle. He certainly did everything he could to strengthen his own power by gradually filling the council with his supporters. He granted titles and positions to the Beauforts, Lancaster's family by his third wife, Catherine Swynford, and to the son of another of his uncles, the Duke of York. Soon he had a strong party of his own and felt that he could begin to avenge himself on the Appellants. Gloucester was discontented with his own lack of power, with the English policy of peace with France, and with Richard's marriage to a French Princess. He was suspected of conspiracy, so Richard had him seized, and sent to Calais. Two of the other Appellants, Arundel and Warwick, were imprisoned and, in imitation of their own policy, "appealed" of treason by some of the King's friends. Arundel was executed, though Warwick escaped by making an abject submission. Gloucester, who had been left in the care of Nottingham, another of the Appellants, was murdered at Calais, whether by Richard's orders or not, is unknown.

The King had now got rid of three of the Appellants, but he continued to show favour to the remaining two, Derby and Nottingham. He made Derby Duke of Hereford, and Nottingham Duke of Norfolk. But since his French marriage Richard had been becoming fond of flattery and display, and determined to increase his own royal authority. So extravagant were his ideas, and so uncertain his temper that some historians have thought that he had become slightly insane. Others have regarded him as a monarch making a desperate throw to establish himself against the barons for the benefit of the masses. In 1398 he held a Parliament at Shrewsbury which cancelled the work of the Merciless Parliament, and gave the King's Council the right to issue Ordinances that should have the force of law. This made Richard supreme, but the nobles had no intention of being ruled by a despotic king, and soon fresh troubles began.

The two Appellants who had retained the King's favour quarrelled. Hereford accused Norfolk of treason, and Norfolk offered to prove his innocence by battle. But the King stopped the fight as soon as it began, and banished the two Dukes.

Hereford for ten years and Norfolk for life. His object is not clear, though he may have been glad to take the opportunity to get rid of the two remaining Appellants. The result was unfortunate for Richard. Hereford was Lancaster's son, and heir to the great Lancastrian estates. He was also popular. When his father died in 1399, Richard seized his inheritance, but the Duke landed in Wales, and, relying on his descent from Edward III, claimed the English crown. Richard had been in



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## MEETING OF HENRY OF LANCASTER AND RICHARD II AT FLINT CASTLE

Ireland, and returned to find his kingdom already lost. He was taken prisoner, forced to abdicate, and died the same year. Probably he was starved to death.

## HENRY IV PERSECUTION OF THE LOLLARDS

Henry of Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster and Hereford, became king as Henry IV. He was a man of energy and ability. As Earl of Derby he had taken an important share in English

politics in the days of the Appellants. He had also been a traveller and adventurer, fighting against the Turks in Central Europe, and making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But he had no real claim to the throne, even when Richard II was safely dead. Through his father, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, he was a grandson of Edward III, but Lancaster's elder brother, Lionel, Duke of Clarence, had left a daughter, Philippa. She had married into the family of the Mortimers, who were Earls of March. Thus the Mortimer title to the throne was better than that of Henry IV. So Henry, who had been made king by the Church and the discontented barons, knew that, if he did not please his supporters, they might easily dispute his right to be king, and dethrone him again.

Henry was too cautious to risk the loss of his kingdom, so he did his best to please both barons and clergy. The Church was becoming alarmed at the attacks made upon it by the Lollards, who did not only criticise its teaching, but its wealth and slackness. Richard II had done little to repress the Lollards, and many courtiers were known to favour them. Henry, in return for clerical support, was now expected to permit their suppression. He consented to the passing of the Statute "De Heretico Comburendo," and this was the beginning of the Lancastrian persecution of heretics, which stamped out Lollardy almost completely.

#### REBELLION UNDER HENRY IV

In spite of his attempts to please every one, Henry's reign was troubled and unquiet. During the French war the great nobles and their bands of retainers had grown used to fighting and disorder, and they were becoming more and more dangerous to the peace of England. Marriage alliances had united many estates under the same lord, and had bound many noble families to each other by ties of relationship. So, if one noble rebelled, he could rely on the support of others closely connected to him by blood. Royal princes and princesses had married members of the baronage, so many barons had royal blood in their veins, and regarded the King as being little superior to them in rank, which made them all the more ready to dispute his authority. Nobles had more power than the King over their own estates. They were jealous of their independence, and usually selfish.

Many of them were ready to plunge the country into civil war, or even to ally themselves to the King's enemies, in order to defend their own privileges, or to get what they wanted.

Henry's troubles began almost immediately with a rebellion in Wales. A Welsh gentleman, Owen Glendower, took advantage of the disordered state of England to attempt to gain independence for Wales. In 1402 he captured Sir Edmund Mortimer, who had been sent against him. The Mortimers had not, so far, attempted to claim the English crown, but Sir Edmund, who was the uncle of the Mortimer heir, the Earl of March, was an ambitious man, so Henry was not at all sorry to have him imprisoned in Wales, and refused to ransom him. This drove Mortimer into disloyalty, and he married Glendower's daughter, and allied himself with the Welsh against Henry.

At the same time there had been trouble with the Scots on the northern border. Henry Percy (known as "Hotspur," because of his energy as a soldier), a son of the Earl of Northumberland, had defeated a Scottish army led by the Earl of Douglas, in the Battle of Hameldon Hill (1402). Douglas and others had been taken prisoner, and Henry, anxious to keep the Scots safely in English hands, forbade the Percies to accept ransom for them. The Percies considered that their rights had been unjustly set aside, so, being allied by marriage to the Mortimer family, they, together with their prisoner, Douglas, joined the rebellion begun by Owen Glendower.

If Henry had not acted promptly, he would probably have lost his throne, but he at once marched to the Welsh border, and attacked the Percies and Douglas, who were on their way to join their allies, at Shrewsbury. In the Battle of Shrewsbury (1403), Hotspur was killed and Henry was victorious. The Percies submitted to the King, and Henry's throne had been saved from the most dangerous attack made upon it. In Wales the fighting continued until Glendower's death, some years later. English authority there was almost destroyed, and Wales remained practically independent until Tudor times.

But Shrewsbury did not put an end to the rebellions against Henry. In 1405 he had to put down the rising of Scrope, the Archbishop of York, and Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham. The Percies, too, remained disloyal, and Northumberland, once more in rebellion, was defeated and killed in the Battle of Bramham Moor.

## CONCESSIONS TO PARLIAMENT HENRY V

Henry needed the support of the barons against his enemies, and they used his dependence upon them to force him to acknowledge and increase the authority of Parliament. This really meant an increase in the power of the nobility, for Parlia-



HENRY V

ment was at this time completely under baronial control. Henry was forced to appoint, as his counsellors, only men of whom Parliament approved, and to admit that the assent of the Commons was necessary to the enactment of law. Parliament regulated the expenses of the royal Household, and inspected the national accounts to see how the money it granted was

being spent. The King also acknowledged the Parliamentary privileges of free speech and freedom from arrest.

In the latter part of Henry's reign the barons began to be divided into political factions. One party was led by Archbishop Arundel, and the other by the Beauforts, the King's half-brothers. These two factions opposed each other on all political questions. The Prince of Wales was closely allied with the Beaufort party, who hoped to persuade Henry IV to abdicate in his son's favour. But Henry, though worn out by the endless struggles of his reign, refused to give up the crown, and remained king until his death (1413).

When his son, Henry V, succeeded him, the power of the nobles had grown so great that they threatened the authority of the King, and their quarrels kept the country in disorder. Henry V was a strong ruler and a capable man, but he was no great statesman. His idea of dealing with the situation was to begin the French war again, so that the nobles could fight abroad instead of at home. This only postponed trouble in England, and the power and rivalries of the nobility led to civil war in the reign of his son, Henry VI.

Most of Henry's short reign was devoted to war with France, during which England was governed by the King's Council of nobles and bishops. But even the war did not prevent rebellion, the most important rising being that of Oldcastle, a Lollard nobleman. The Lollards had cause to hate the King, for Henry, who was bigoted in religious matters, encouraged their persecution by the Church.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR—II

#### THE STATE OF FRANCE

There were two distinct periods of fighting in the Hundred Years' War. The first was in the time of Edward III., and the second in that of Henry V and Henry VI. These periods were separated by the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV., during which, though peace was never made between England and France, truces were arranged, and little fighting took place. In Richard II's reign both the King and the Duke of Lancaster saw the wisdom of a peace policy, while Henry IV., though not disinclined for war, had his attention fully employed in keeping his own throne secure.

By the end of the first stage of the war, the French had almost succeeded in driving the English out of their country. Only Calais and Bordeaux, with the districts round them, remained in English hands. Yet the struggle had been much more disastrous for France than for England, for, with the exception of a few raids on the English coast, all the fighting had taken place on French soil. French cities had been sacked and plundered, and peasants of some districts had had their crops and villages burnt again and again. As in England, constant employment in warfare had made the nobles and their followers more disorderly and turbulent than before, and less inclined to respect the authority of the Crown. In France, as in England, many great nobles could claim royal descent, for kings had either granted estates to their younger children, or had married them to noble heiresses. These semi-royal nobles, known in France as "Princes of the Lîches," were, like the rest of the nobility, interested only in upholding their own power, and their royal blood increased their pride and made them particularly dangerous to the monarchy.

Unfortunately for France, Charles V., who had driven out the English, died not many years after Edward III. of England, leaving his son, Charles VI., a boy of only eleven years old, to succeed him. This minority gave the nobles a chance to get power into their hands, and they began to struggle with each

other for control of the country. When Charles grew up, he became insane, so the struggle of parties continued, and France was torn by civil war.

The struggle in France was between two noble families of royal descent, those of Burgundy and Orleans. John, the French king who had been taken prisoner at Poitiers, had granted Burgundy to his son, Philip, from whom the later Dukes of Burgundy were descended. Louis, Duke of Orleans, was the younger brother of the mad Charles VI, and, in 1407, was murdered by the orders of John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy. The Count of Armagnac, the father-in-law of the new Duke of Orleans, then became the leader of his party, so the two French factions were known as "Burgundians" and "Armagnacs".

Burgundy had hoped, by murdering Orleans, to make himself supreme, but instead of this, civil war broke out. Both parties appealed to England for help, and, as Henry IV was by now more secure on the throne, he was not unwilling to interfere in France. But English policy was very changeable, for the Prince of Wales and the Beaufoits wanted to support the Burgundians, while Arundel and the Duke of Clarence preferred the Armagnacs. As a result of this, little was done, and the French war did not begin again in earnest until the reign of Henry V.

### HENRY V THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT

Henry V was no romantic hero. He was a clever soldier, who had gained experience of war during the rebellions of his father's reign. Probably a desire to use his own talents as a general had as much to do with his eagerness for war with France as had his wish to find employment abroad for the unruly English nobles. Henry understood the work of conquering a country much better than Edward III or the Black Prince, had done. Their notion of warfare never advanced beyond that of plundering raids, enlivened by occasional brilliant but futile victories. In what Henry undertook he was efficient, but he did not realise that England was too weak to hold France, even if it could be conquered. Like many sensible people, Henry was able to delude himself, and he seems to have persuaded himself that he was, by descent from Edward III, the rightful king of France. It was, however, evident that, if Edward III could claim the French throne through a woman, his mother, Isabella,

then the Mortimers could claim the English throne through a woman, Philippa of Clarence. If Henry ought to be king of France, he had no right to be king of England. Nevertheless, having made an alliance with the Duke of Burgundy (1413), he laid claim to the French crown, and, in 1415, invaded Normandy.

His first task was to besiege and take Haifleur, on the Norman coast, which would be a useful base for the conquest of the rest of Normandy. Then, as it was almost winter, his counsellors advised him to return home, but he insisted on marching along the north coast of France to Calais, and returning to England from there. This march was so obviously unwise that it is difficult to understand why so clever a general should have undertaken it, and only luck prevented it from ending in disaster. The English were threatened by a French army three times as large as their own, which might easily have cut their communications, made it impossible for them to leave the country, and then starved them out. Burgundy, who did not want to make himself unpopular in France by helping the English, did nothing for his ally. When the English had crossed the Somme, they found the French between them and Calais, and were obliged to fight near Agincourt.

The small English army was at a disadvantage, and, if the French had remained on the defensive, they must have been victorious. But they were so sure of themselves that they could not refrain from repeating the error they had made at Crécy and Poitiers, and advancing to the attack over ground swept by the arrows of the English archers. The result was that they had been thrown into confusion and half-defeated before they had reached the English lines, and after fierce hand-to-hand fighting they were beaten and driven off the field. The Battle of Agincourt (1415), though it had little result beyond the military glory which it won for Henry, helped to increase English enthusiasm for the war, and to impress the French once again with the invincibility of English armies.

#### CONQUEST OF NORMANDY AND TREATY OF TROYES

When Henry again invaded France (1417), he did not embark on any more dangerous and useless marches. He devoted himself soberly to the conquest of Normandy, so that the war became one of sieges, and of the extension of English power by the capture of one town after another. Henry was too wise to



1415. French book of hours, fol. 1. Gouache & Crayon, Louvre

THE MORNING OF AGINCOURT

permit his soldiers to plunder a country that he intended to make his own and, by reducing taxes and improving the administration, he tried to make the Normans willing to accept his rule. Though this gained him the support of the common people, the gentry continued to hate the English, and if it had not been for the civil war in France little progress could have been made.

The French factions were still quarrelling with each other. The Burgundians had seized Paris and taken prisoner the mad King, in whose name they were trying to rule the country. The Armagnacs had retaliated by persuading the Dauphin to join their party, and setting up another government, in his name, at Poitiers. Their enmity prevented them from taking any effective action against the English. But Burgundy would give no open support to Henry V. because he feared that an English alliance would make him unpopular and give his rivals the advantage over him.

Henry's progress was slow, for the English were tiring of the war, and it was difficult for him to obtain money and recruits. He might have been forced to admit failure had not the treachery of the Armagnacs come to his aid. In 1419, they arranged a meeting between the Dauphin and John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, at the Bridge of Montereau. There Burgundy, who had hoped to patch up a peace with the other party, was murdered in the Dauphin's presence. This murder widened the breach between the two parties and drove the new Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, into open support of the English. Influenced by him, the mad Charles VI agreed to the Treaty of Troyes (1420). By this Treaty it was arranged that Henry should marry Charles's daughter Catherine, and should be acknowledged heir to the throne of France.

In the Treaty of Troyes Henry V seemed to have realised his ambition of obtaining the French throne, but he himself was probably quite aware that this was not so. The Armagnacs were still hostile, and the Dauphin would certainly never acknowledge an arrangement which deprived him of his right to the throne. It was growing almost impossible to obtain recruits in England, and English chances of success depended principally upon the Burgundian alliance, which would only be continued so long as Philip had anything to gain by it. Henry himself was not a strong man and was worn out by his warlike life. Having



MAP OF FRANCE TO ILLUSTRATE THE SECOND PERIOD OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

— March of Henry V to Agincourt, 1415

 Land held by England and England's allies in 1429 In that year English conquests reached their greatest extent and with the appearance of Joan of Arc the tide turned in favour of France At the end of the war England retained only Calais

conquered Normandy he saw that his only hope lay in a rapid advance into France, and the achievement of brilliant successes. Meanwhile his brother, the Duke of Clarence, had been defeated and killed in the Battle of Beaugé (1421), so the King led a last expedition into France. After the capture of some towns he died in 1422, leaving France half-conquered and England full of factions and disorder.

## BEDFORD RELATIONS WITH BURGUNDY

When Henry V died, his son, Henry VI, was still a baby, and the management of the French war passed into the hands of the new King's uncle, John, Duke of Bedford. Bedford had none of Henry V's brilliance, but he was extremely capable and honest. Among the selfish and grasping French and English nobles of the day he stands out as one of the very few who worked loyally in his country's interest rather than in his own. He carried on the French war with, probably as much success as it was possible to achieve, for Henry V had left a hopeless task to his successors. The English held Paris and a good deal of land in northern France, but their hold upon it was very insecure. They could not raise enough men and money for the war, and they depended entirely upon the Burgundian alliance. Bedford's government of the conquered French provinces was excellent, but the whole country was in terrible disorder, and the inhabitants were ready to rise against the English at the first opportunity.

Charles VI, the mad King of France, died in the same year as Henry V. The English and the Burgundians accepted the little Henry VI of England as his successor. The Armagnacs proclaimed the Dauphin's right to the throne as Charles VII, and the French naturally preferred a king of their own race. Yet for a time things seemed to be going fairly well for England. Bedford negotiated an alliance between Burgundy, Brittany, and England, and the English won the Battle of Cravant (1423), and the Battle of Vimeuil (1424). These victories increased their reputation for being unconquerable in battle, and after them the war settled down to a humdrum course of sieges and small skirmishes. The English made steady progress, conquering Maine, and drawing towards the important town of Orleans.

But, in the midst of their success, they came very near to losing the support of the Duke of Burgundy. Bedford's younger brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was a brilliant, but unstable person, quite ready to upset all Bedford's policy in order to attain his own ends. Burgundy already held some of the provinces of the Low Countries and was very eager to obtain the rest. So he had forced one of his cousins, Jacqueline of Hainault, to marry another cousin, the Duke of Brabant, who was unlikely to have any children. Philip of Burgundy hoped,

when Brabant and Jacqueline died, that he would inherit their land. But Jacqueline did not like her husband, so she managed to get the marriage annulled, and married Humphrey of Gloucester instead. Humphrey wanted Hainault for himself, and took an army there to conquer the province. This infuriated Burgundy, but, fortunately for the Anglo-Burgundian alliance, Gloucester failed and, abandoning both Jacqueline and Hainault, married someone else. The episode had, however, shown how very easily England might lose Burgundian support.

Gloucester's failure had made it possible for England and Burgundy to be allies again. In 1428 the English began their siege of Orleans, which dragged on for a long time, because it was conducted without much energy. Before the town had been taken, the English cause had received a severe blow through the appearance of Joan of Arc, the "Maid of Orleans". Her successes revived the French national spirit, and destroyed belief in the invincibility of the English.

### JOAN OF ARC

Joan sprang from the people. She was the daughter of a farmer, and believed that she was guided by divine voices, and destined to drive the English out of France. She convinced Charles VII and the French leaders sufficiently to persuade them to let her attempt to save Orleans, and, dressed in the armour of a man, she led her soldiers to drive the English away from the city. Her success in saving Orleans (1429) convinced the French soldiers of her divine mission, while the English and Burgundians feared her as a witch. Joan's object was to get Rheims, where French kings were usually crowned, into French hands, and then, after the coronation of Charles VII, to return to her father's farm. Under her leadership the French followed up their success at Orleans by driving the English, little by little, out of the valley of the Loire and then clearing the way to Rheims. Charles was crowned there but the French soldiers would not permit Joan to leave them and, against her own will, she took part in their advance upon Paris. The attack on Paris failed and, in spite of Joan's entreaties, Charles disbanded his army and ceased his advance. Joan herself was captured at Compiègne, and sold to the English, who had long ago promised that she should be burnt as a witch if she fell into their hands.



E.N.A.

STATUE OF JOAN OF ARC BY PRINCESS MARIE OF ORLEANS

The French made no attempt to save her, though they could have offered to exchange for her the great English soldier, Talbot, whom they had captured at Patay. While the common soldiers were loyal to Joan, the French nobles were jealous of her influence and glad to be rid of her. She was tried at Rouen by an ecclesiastical court and burnt as a heretic because she would not acknowledge the authority of the Church to decide whether the voices by which she had been guided were divine or not.

### LOSS OF FRANCE

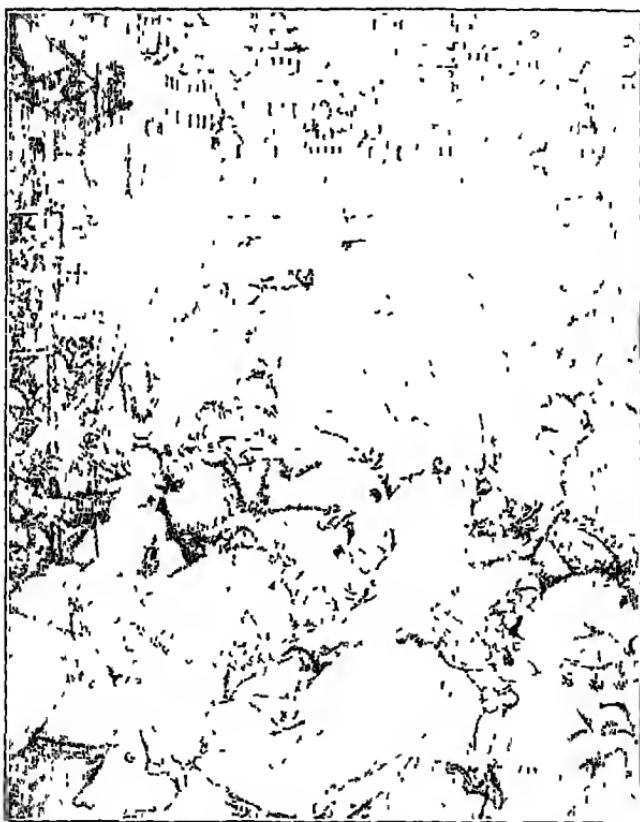
Joan was dead and the French attack upon Paris had failed, but the English cause was really quite hopeless. The English people were tired of the war and had neither men nor money to spare for it. The peasants of Normandy revolted against their English rulers. Moreover, Burgundy was once more offended, for Bedford, hoping to strengthen English influence among the Burgundians, married, as his second wife, Jacquetta of Luxembourg, the daughter of one of Burgundy's vassals. Duke Philip resented this marriage and was shrewd enough to see the weakness of the English position. He began to negotiate with Charles VII, with whom, to the great indignation of the English, he concluded the Treaty of Arras (1435).

The loss of the Burgundian alliance destroyed all hope of further English conquests. In the same year the death of the Duke of Bedford deprived England of her best soldier and statesman. Negotiations for peace were begun, for now the English hoped only to save as much as possible of their conquests. But no agreement about peace terms could be reached. The French advanced slowly and cautiously, refusing to fight battles but taking castles and towns. They had better artillery than the English, and artillery was now playing an important part in war.

The English conquests were slowly being lost. In 1444 the Earl of Suffolk tried to pave the way for peace with France by arranging a marriage between Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou. But he could obtain no more than a truce, and, to secure the marriage at all, was forced to promise that the province of Maine should be given up to Margaret's father. The surrender of Maine aroused great indignation in England, and the truce

proved of little value, for it was broken by the English. The French promptly invaded both Normandy and Guienne, the two provinces that still remained in English hands (1449).

The French quickly overran Normandy, and the defeat of the English in the Battle of Formigny (1450) marked the final



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REPULSE OF PHILIP, DUKE OF BURGUNDY, FROM CALAIS

loss of the duchy. The French attack on Guienne was equally successful, but there the war was prolonged by a rising of the people round Bordeaux, who preferred English rule, and wished to drive out the French again. When the French had defeated the English troops sent to support the rising in the Battle of

Chastillon (1453), the war was at an end, and only Calais remained in English hands.

The struggle that had begun in the days of Edward III was now over, and it had brought nothing but trouble and disorder, both to France and England. In spite of many brilliant successes England was neither strong enough to conquer France, nor to hold such conquests as were made there. The French peasants had suffered terribly. The English nobles had grown so powerful and unruly that England was torn by factions, and on the verge of a civil war.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE WARS OF THE ROSES

#### THE BEAUFORT-GLOUCESTER FACTIONS

Since, when Henry V died, his son, Henry VI, was only a baby, some kind of authority had to be established to rule the country until the King grew up. This provided the English nobles with a chance to get power into their own hands. Henry V had left the government of his French conquests to the Duke of Bedford, and that of England to his younger brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. This was unfortunate for it meant that Bedford's talents were wasted in struggling with the hopeless situation in France. Affairs in England, where he might have dealt with the unruly nobles, became worse and worse.

The nobles would not permit Gloucester to govern England. Though he was granted the title of "Protector," it was made clear that all power was to be in the hands of a Council, chosen by the barons. Moreover, Gloucester was only to be Protector when his brother, Bedford, was absent in France. As soon as Bedford landed in England he was Protector by right. The ambitious Gloucester found these restrictions very humiliating. Most of the nobles regarded them as no more than a new move in the old struggle to limit the power of the royal family and increase the independence of the barons. But they were partly due to the ambition of another man of royal blood, Cardinal Beaufort.

Cardinal Beaufort was one of those churchmen of the Middle Ages, whose career had little to do with religion. He was the son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, by his third marriage. Thus he was the half-brother of Henry IV, and the uncle of the Duke of Gloucester. He was immensely wealthy, and very fond of power. He had played an important part in English politics as the close friend and adviser of his nephew, Henry V, and he now hoped, if he could limit Gloucester's authority, to use his influence over the nobles of the Council to make himself

the real ruler of England. The quarrels of Beaufort and Gloucester almost led to civil war, and when, in 1426, their followers were forbidden to come to Parliament armed, they came with sticks for their weapons, so that the assembly was nicknamed the "Parliament of Bats."

Bedford tried in vain to make peace. Because Beaufort supported the barons, he was hated by the people of London and other towns, with whom Gloucester was popular. At the



CARDINAL BEAUFORT

same time the way in which the Council managed affairs showed that the nobility, when they got power into their hands, used it only for their own selfish ends. The members of the Council paid themselves huge salaries, but did nothing to keep order, and left each great lord to rule his land as he pleased. Some of the nobles even made war on each other, and while England was losing her French conquests, she was steadily drifting into the same state of disorder and faction as had prevailed in France, when Henry V. re-opened the war.

### THE RULE OF SUFFOLK

In 1447 both Beaufort and Gloucester died, and, had Henry VI had the characteristics of a strong ruler, he might have ended the struggle of the English factions. But Henry, though a gentle and religious man, had inherited a tendency to insanity from his grandfather, Charles VI of France, and was at best weak, and easily controlled by those about him. He attempted to take the government into his own hands, but in reality this meant that the country was ruled by the Earl of Suffolk, his favourite minister.

Suffolk belonged to the Beaufort faction, and had assisted Cardinal Beaufort in his efforts to make peace with France. Probably his influence over the King was due to Henry's wife, Margaret of Anjou, for it was Suffolk who had arranged her marriage, and she was known to favour him. He had been forced to promise to give up Maine to the French, and this made him so unpopular in England that, in 1450, his enemies brought a charge of treason against him, and obtained his banishment from the country. So great was the popular hatred he inspired that he was murdered by the crew of the ship on which he was leaving England.

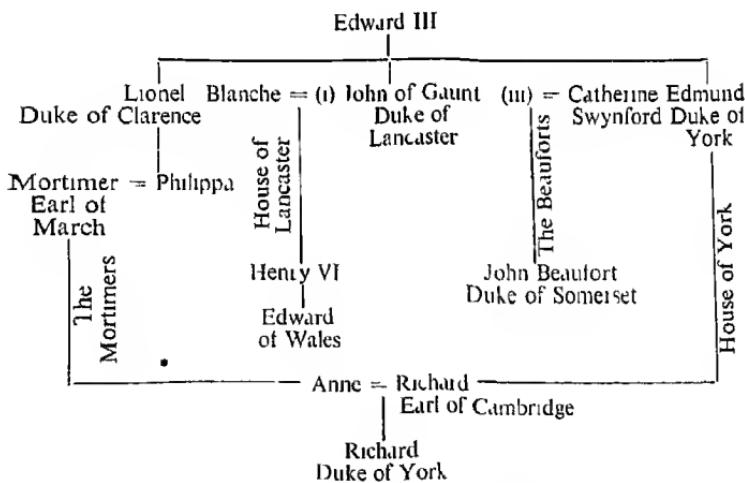
### SOMERSET AND YORK

The fall and murder of Suffolk was a severe blow to the Beaufort party, which included the Queen, Margaret of Anjou, whose husband, Henry VI, was almost completely under her influence. In the same year (1450) a popular rising under Jack Cade, demanded better government. Cade (whose real name is doubtful, but who was probably a man of rank), called himself Mortimer, and claimed to be a relation of the Duke of York, to whom the Mortimer title to the throne had descended. On the death of Gloucester, York had become leader of the opposition to the Beauforts. After the rebels had got London into their hands and begun to plunder it, the rebellion was suppressed. But it had shown that the leadership of the rival political parties in England was now in the hands of two nobles, Somerset and York. These two men had claims to the English crown so the quarrel of the political factions was gradually becoming a struggle for the throne itself.

## THE SUCCESSION QUESTION

The House of Lancaster had never had a strong title to the throne, except as the choice of Parliament. According to English rules of succession, Mortimer, Earl of March, who was heir<sup>to</sup> to Philippa of Clarence, daughter of Edward III's second son, had a better claim to it than Henry IV, who was descended from John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the fourth son of Edward III. In Henry VI's reign the question of the succession became important. So long as the King had no son, both Richard, Duke of York, who inherited the Mortimer claim, and John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, who was the next heir of the Lancastrian House (the Beauforts being descendants of John of Gaunt's third marriage), might claim to succeed him.

A point in favour of York was his own personality. He was a strong, capable man and a striking contrast to the weak Henry VI who was much dominated by his wife Margaret of Anjou.



When, in 1553, Henry VI's son, Edward, was born, York, the heir to the Mortimer claim, must either drive out the House of Lancaster or lose all chance of becoming king. Therefore, Margaret of Anjou and her friends, however loyal his conduct might be, were always hostile to him as a possible rival to the claims of the little Prince Edward.

## OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR

At first York remained loyal to the House of Lancaster, and did not bear the Mortimer arms, or do anything to call attention to his descent. But he made various attempts to get control of the government. His rival, Somerset, however, had the valuable support of Margaret of Anjou, and though York ruled the kingdom when the King, for a time, became insane, as soon as Henry recovered, Margaret persuaded him to dismiss York from the Council again. In the end York appealed to arms, and defeated and killed Somerset in the First Battle of St Albans (1455). This only increased Margaret's hostility, and though he was made regent when the King had another fit of insanity, he once more lost power as soon as Henry recovered.

Even as leader of the opposition, York was powerful, and he had the support of such nobles as were discontented with the existing government, especially of the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, who were related to him by blood. Salisbury belonged to a younger branch of the Neville family, but had acquired his lands and title by marriage. His son, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, had done the same thing, and was even more powerful than his father. Warwick was a typical example of the great baron of the period. He himself had great estates and innumerable followers, and he could rely on the support of many other nobles, who were related to, or dependent on, him. He was an able man, who showed himself an efficient soldier and administrator, but, like most of the baronage, his aims were selfish. To increase his own authority, and limit the royal power. During his later career he earned the title of "Kingmaker".

In 1459 the Yorkists gathered in the Welsh Marches to attack the government, but their army deserted, and, in the Rout of Ludlow (1459), they were forced to flee. The Queen, who, after Somerset's death, had become the real leader of the other party, was now triumphant. But the Yorkists had a safe refuge at Calais, of which Warwick was Captain, and in the next year they invaded England again. Salisbury seized London, while Warwick and the young Edward, Earl of March, York's eldest son, defeated and captured Henry VI in the Battle of Northampton (1460). York then appeared in London and, rather to the displeasure of his baronial supporters, who would have been

quite satisfied to have established control over the government, claimed the crown of England for himself.

Though south-eastern England was in their hands, the Yorkists had not yet secured control of the whole country. Warwick remained to guard London, but Edward of March was sent to the Welsh border, while York and Salisbury went north, where Margaret was raising the country against them. They were defeated by the Lancastrians in the Battle of Wakefield (1460). York was killed, and Salisbury captured and executed, for the conflicting parties showed no mercy to each others' leaders. Margaret then led her victorious army south, burning and plundering as if she were in enemy country. Warwick advanced to meet her, but was defeated in the Second Battle of St Albans, and the road to London was open to the Lancastrians.

#### YORKIST VICTORY EDWARD IV

If Margaret had taken London, the final victory would have been with the Lancastrians, but, for some unknown reason, her victorious army did not advance to the capital, and retreated north again. Edward of March, who had, through his father's death, become Duke of York, had won a victory over the Lancastrians of the Welsh border in the Battle of Mortimer's Cross. He now joined forces with Warwick and entered London again. There he was proclaimed king, as Edward IV.

The new King and the Earl of Warwick then marched north together to deal with the Lancastrian army. In the Battle of Towton (1461), in Yorkshire, they inflicted a crushing defeat on the enemy, and Edward became king in fact as well as in name.

Though in the battles of Mortimer's Cross and Towton the young Edward IV. had proved himself a good general, it was the power of the Earl of Warwick and the Neville family that had placed him on the throne. It was Warwick's brother, John Neville, Marquis of Montague, who completed the work of crushing the Lancastrians in the north, defeating them in the Battles of Hedgeley Moor and Hexham (1464). Having made Edward king, Warwick certainly intended to be the real ruler of the country, and neither Englishmen nor foreigners regarded the new King as more than a figure-head. If Edward, in spite of his youth, had not been a man of unusual capacity and strength of will, Warwick would have succeeded in winning the

long struggle between Crown and Barons by making his own authority, backed by that of the nobles who supported him, supreme

Unfortunately for Warwick, Edward was not the sort of man to submit quietly to attempts to control him. Physically he was lazy and does not seem to have been very strong, though he was said to be one of the best-looking men of his day. Also he was fond of pleasure and had extravagant tastes. On the other hand, when roused by an emergency, he could act with decision. He was successful in battle, clever at raising money, and patient and skilful in planning to make his authority supreme. His character had an important influence on the course of English history, for he was one of a number of strong rulers, who crushed the power of the nobility and increased that of the Crown.

Edward saw the need for strong and efficient government, but, until he had got rid of Neville control and of the fear of a Lancastrian restoration, he could do little to establish it. The first ten years of his reign were occupied by his struggle with the "Kingmaker". To counterbalance the power of Warwick and the barons it was necessary that the King should have a party of his own, and this he built up with considerable skill. He had always shown sympathy for the common people, ordering his soldiers, in battle, to strike down the noble leaders and spare the commons. He now obtained the favour of the middle class in the towns by measures to protect English industries from foreign competition. He also devised a plan for creating a new nobility that would support him against the existing nobles. He married Elizabeth Woodville, a lady of low rank, and granted titles and estates to her relations. Warwick, who had wished to marry the King to a French princess, greatly resented this, and became the avowed enemy of the Woodvilles.

#### THE KING'S QUARREL WITH WARWICK

Edward and Warwick next quarrelled over the question of a marriage alliance with Burgundy. Then the Kingmaker married his own daughter to Edward's younger brother, George, Duke of Clarence, perhaps with the idea of creating a possible rival to Edward for the throne. King and Earl were mutually suspicious, and, in a rising in Warwick's favour, which occurred

in the midlands, the King's supporters were defeated at Edgecote Field (1469), and he himself was taken prisoner.

Warwick was obliged either to release Edward, or to decide definitely to place either Clarence or Henry VI., who was in the Tower, on the throne. Probably he thought he had taught the King a sufficient lesson, for he let him go, only to find that the quarrel continued as before. Finally, in 1470, Warwick and Clarence left England and allied themselves with the Lancastrians, who had the promise of French support. Returning, they easily drove out Edward and replaced Henry VI. on the throne.

Warwick was now the real ruler of England, for Margaret of Anjou was still abroad. Also, by marrying his daughter, Anne Neville, to Henry VI.'s son, Edward, he had made it probable that his influence would be lasting. But his position was very weak. The Lancastrians mistrusted him, and his ally, Clarence, was discontented because a Lancastrian restoration destroyed all his hopes of getting the throne for himself. Meanwhile, Edward IV. had obtained support from the Duke of Burgundy, to whom he had married his sister, and in the spring of 1471 he landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire.

Warwick's brother, Montague, had a good chance to defeat Edward before he had had time to raise an army. But, for some reason, he did nothing, and Edward marched south to meet Warwick in the midlands. In the Battle of Barnet (1471), the Earl was defeated and killed, but Edward had still to deal with Margaret of Anjou, who now landed in England and joined her supporters in the Welsh Marches. She was defeated in the Battle of Tewkesbury (1471), and Edward was once more king of England. He was more secure than he had ever been before, for the death of Prince Edward at Tewkesbury and the murder of Henry VI. in the Tower ended the direct line of the House of Lancaster, which was now represented only by John of Gaunt's third family, the Beauforts.

### THE YORKIST DESPOTISM

Edward was now free to establish a strong monarchy. He troubled very little with Parliament, but ruled the country as he pleased. He ruled the nobles firmly, and chose his friends and supporters from the new nobility of the Woodville family, and

the great London merchants He was keenly interested in trade, and himself invested money in trading ventures To get a sufficient revenue without asking Parliament for it, he increased the severity with which the customs and other dues were collected He also taxed the wealthy in accordance with his own judgment, by demanding "benevolences" from them Benevolences were supposed to be free gifts, made to the King by the giver's own wish

Edward saw how necessary money was to strong government, and never neglected an opportunity of securing it In 1475 he led an expedition to France, but made peace almost immediately, by the Treaty of Pecquigny (1475), when the French King, already engaged in a struggle with the Duke of Burgundy, offered him a pension, and the assurance of seven years' peace with France Most of Edward's troubles came from the quarrels of his brothers, the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester Both had married daughters of the Earl of Warwick, and now quarrelled over the Neville inheritance In the end Clarence's persistent intrigues and disloyalty led to his trial and death (1478)

### EDWARD V AND RICHARD III

Edward's death (1482) gave the nobles an opportunity to begin their quarrels again His son, Edward V, was only a child, and was in the hands of his relatives, the Woodvilles Against the Woodvilles were allied Edward's youngest brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of Buckingham, a very powerful noble, and Lord Hastings, one of Edward's new nobility This party, headed by Gloucester, got the King into their hands, and imprisoned and then executed the leaders of the Woodville party Gloucester was made Protector, but he soon began to aim at the throne itself, and Buckingham, with the idea of becoming a second "Kingmaker," supported him The two seized and executed Hastings, and Gloucester was made king as Richard III. Edward V and his little brother were placed in the Tower, where, soon afterwards, they were murdered, possibly by Richard's orders

Richard was an efficient ruler, but, instead of carrying on the policy of Edward IV, he tried to please the nobility, and lost the support of the middle classes, especially in the south

Buckingham, too, was soon discontented, for the new King showed no intention of submitting to his control. Now that Edward V was dead, Richard's principal rival for the throne was Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who, through his mother,



RICHARD III

Margaret Beaufort, had inherited the Beaufort claim to the throne. His father was the son of Owen Tudor, a Welsh squire, who had married Catherine of Valois, the widow of Henry V. Richmond himself was abroad, but Buckingham decided to attempt to place him on the throne.

Buckingham's rebellion failed, and he was executed, but Richard's position was insecure, and he was constantly troubled by plots. In 1485 Richmond landed in Wales. Supported by French and Welsh troops he advanced to meet Richard, who was defeated and killed in the Battle of Bosworth (1485). Henry Tudor was then proclaimed king as Henry VII.

THE "HUNDRED YEARS' WAR" AND THE  
"WARS OF THE ROSES"

Reigns of EDWARD III, 1327-1377, RICHARD II, 1377-1399, HENRY IV, 1399-1413, HENRY V, 1413-1422, HENRY VI, 1422-1461, EDWARD IV, 1461-1482, RICHARD III 1483-1485

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	1333 Battle of Halidon Hill	1338 Beginning of Hundred Years' War
1345	1346 Battle of Neville's Cross	1340 Battle of Sluys
		1346 Battle of Crecy
	1348 THE BLACK DEATH	
	1351 Statute of Labourers	1356 Battle of Poitiers
1365		1360 Treaty of Bretigny
		1367 Battle of Navarete
		1370 Massacre of Limoges
	1376 The "Good" Parliament	
1385	1381 The Peasants' Revolt	
	1386 Battle of Radcot Bridge.	
	1387 The "Merciless" Parliament	
	1398 Parliament of Shrewsbury	
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	1402 Battle of Homildon Hill	
1405	1404 Battle of Shrewsbury	

1405	Henry V, 1413-22		1415 Battle of Agincourt
1425			1420 Treaty of Troyes
			1423 Battle of Cravant
			1424 Battle of Verneuil
			1429 Relief of Orleans
			1431 Joan of Arc burnt
			1435 Treaty of Arras
1445	Henry VI, 1422-1461	1444 Marriage of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou	
		1447 End of Government by Council	
		1450 { Murder of Suffolk Cade's rebellion	1450 Battle of Formigny
		1455 1st Battle of St Albans	1453 Battle of Chastillon
		1460 { Battle of Northampton Battle of Wakefield	
1465		1461 Battle of Towton	
	Edward IV, 1461-1482	1470 Lancastrian restoration	
		1471 { Battle of Barnet Battle of Tewkesbury	1475 Treaty of Pecquigny
1485	Richard III 1483-85	1485 Battle of Bosworth	



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